

LOVAT DICKSON'S MAGAZINE

A MAGAZINE FOR THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE

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Looking Forward

SOME deviation from the policy originally defined for this magazine will be apparent in this issue. To the usual short stories, we have added several articles and a number of other pages on literary and editorial matters, which we propose from now on to make a regular feature of the magazine. By extending its scope in this way, we hope to increase the range of interest of the magazine, and to appeal to a still wider circle of thinking readers interested in the literary tendencies, the humanistic activities, and personalities of our time.

The short stories remain as they were: examples of the best contemporary work in a literary form in which most interesting experiments are being made at the moment. These experiments reflect changes that are subconsciously taking place over the whole range of imaginative literature, but which are more apparent in the short story than in the novel. The briefer form

reveals strikingly the divergence from traditional patterns, and with its brevity and completeness is reflective of the spirit of the age.

It should not be inferred that the short stories in *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* are offered only for their interest as specimens of an evolutionary change. They are offered as entertaining narratives differing from the "popular" short story in the fact that they are better written, are more sincere in emotion, more thoughtful in purpose, and more truly reflective of the environment and spirit of our time. This, any one of our short stories could say, is what everyman, or a section of everyman, thinks and does. The story reports the facts; it is for the reader to consider its implication.

Our stories do indeed make demands upon the public we intelligence of our Aim For readers. The purpose of imaginative fiction has never been solely to divert; its pur-

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pose has been as little that as it has been, on the other hand, to instruct or denounce. Its highest aim has been to stimulate thought to the point where the reader surrenders his imagination to the power of the narrative, the dominance of a character, or the inevitability of a chain of events. In this magazine we have striven to make that surrender as frequent and as complete as possible. We have been well aware that success does not necessarily accompany worthiness of aim. But there are proverbial words about *tenacity* of aim; and in this magazine, as in the type of books we publish, we have begun to see the rewards of devoting our activities, as our inclination already impelled us, solely towards a reading public capable of thinking and eager to think.

The decision to extend the scope of this magazine **The Magazine in Future** to include articles and other literary features, as well as short stories, was taken in the conviction that these would be of interest to our readers: the articles, because outside the form of fiction, though not necessarily outside the form of narrative, they would comment on, or reflect, human affairs and the tendencies of our time; the literary features, because no periodical at the moment offers on a large scale news and comments on literary personalities and their activities.

In future, *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* proposes to do both these things. The contents of this issue are an indication of the form we project for it.

Any divergence from an established programme is **A Special Offer** in the nature of a gamble. It is possible that some of our readers are interested in the short story to the exclusion of all other matters. But it is more probable, we feel, that they are interested in anything that is intelligent and thoughtful in itself; and the articles that we add to the contents of the magazine are intended to be that. What we are seeking to establish is a magazine that will occupy a definite and marked place in our readers' interests. We want it to become a personal thing, to enjoy the friendship and the confidence that such a relationship implies. Only in that way will it succeed as we in our zeal want it to succeed, and as we believe it is justified in succeeding.

The cost of an annual subscription to *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* is twelve shillings per annum, post free to any part of the world. If you approve the change in the form of the magazine and would like to receive it regularly for the next twelve months, will you sign the form below and send it in to us? Subscriptions entered on this form will be filled at 10s. per annum. The offer is made not

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as a bargain to attract the economical buyer, but in order to enlist permanent supporters for a journal which we hope yet

to make the most important and the most interesting periodical in the English-speaking world.

L. D.

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L.D.M.O.

HUGH FORSYTH

King Timothy

THE sun was rising over Meikleburg. Twenty miles west of the city the snow-covered mountains, gigantic natural ramparts guarding the State against invasion, shone in the morning light like so many enormous pink birthday cakes. Birds were singing in the gardens. The townsfolk were astir.

In the gaily-festooned Königstrasse little boys and girls in nightgowns popped their heads out of windows to see what the weather would be.

"We shall have a fine day!" they cried, for the sky was clear. The flags and bunting hung idly, with no breath of wind to stir them; even the Imperial standard, flying from the tall Palace flagstaff, hardly fluttered in the breeze.

Near by, the barracks echoed with busy sounds of preparation. The soldiers were polishing their bayonets and their buttons, or washing down their horses. Trumpeter Feldstein and Trumpeter Schmidt, both rather red in the face, were practising the Birthday March in a corner of the guardroom, while upstairs Sergeant-Major Liebel strutted about before a looking-glass, issuing sharp commands to his reflection.

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The whole building, indeed, was a pandemonium. The rattle of bayonet and sabre, the clinking of tin plates in the mess-room, vied with the din of shouts and whinnies from the stables. In a corridor some privates were arguing strenuously as to the exact age of the Queen when she passed away. Private Gregor, who had been endeavouring to find some comrades with enough spare time to join him in a patriotic song, at length succeeded. Two of his friends gave over rubbing up their buttons, and the party retired to a bench, where they sat and sang together in the loudest voices at their command.

The sounds of bustle and excitement floated across even to the Palace itself.

"What a hullabaloo these soldier fellows do make!" complained the royal chef, as he licked the dough greedily from his fingers. "I can hear them right across the courtyard! Anybody would think, to listen to them, they were the only people who mattered. But if you were to ask His Majesty to-night whether he'd enjoyed General von Booby's stupid Parade or my *éclairs* the better, there's not much doubt about what he'd answer."

"Your *éclairs*, of course, dear Monsieur Blanc!" cried a young man in white overalls, feverishly whipping a bowl of eggs. "There can be no question at all."

"No, indeed, Monsieur," agreed another. "There could be no two answers. All the same, I've often wished I was a soldier. After all, ours is the inferior calling. We merely sustain life so that soldiers can destroy it."

"Go and finish that icing, and don't talk nonsense!" replied Monsieur Blanc angrily. "His Majesty prefers meringues to militia, and there's an end to it."

"What's the menu to-night, dear Monsieur Blanc?" asked the young man in white overalls. "Something special,

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I'll be bound. Prince Heinrich will be there, they say, and the Prime Minister, and all the ambassadors, of course. Perhaps, dear Monsieur Blanc, you will honour the occasion with one of your celebrated soufflés."

"The Lord Warden of the Household has instructed me that a soufflé will not come amiss," admitted Monsieur Blanc proudly; "but that will be the merest drop in the ocean. The Banquet will be the most beautiful in the world. I intend such soups—such sauces! Even you who have worked with me and know me, my dear Fritz, will be amazed to-night! Such delicacy in the flavouring! And they're having the gold plate out, that hasn't been used these nine months, since the old King died."

Monsieur Blanc beamed at his little audience.

"Kingship is indeed a blessed state," he smiled, "when Monsieur Blanc is in the Royal Kitchens."

Meanwhile a whispered conversation was being held outside the bedchamber of His Majesty King Timothy the Second, by Grace of God Sovereign of Meikleburg and the Southern Plains. While the Lord Warden of the Household gazed anxiously at his watch, waiting for the minute hand to creep round to eight o'clock, the Vice-Chamberlain kept referring to a little black notebook he held and muttering incoherently to himself. Frau von Potzheim, His Majesty's old nurse, stood beside them, bearing a silver goblet of effervescing saline on a golden salver.

"Three minutes to eight," announced the Lord Warden in a hushed voice.

"Your Majesty . . . accept the congratulations . . . a united people . . . a prosperous reign . . ." mumbled the Vice-Chamberlain to nobody in particular.

"Really," said the Lord Warden crossly, "I've never

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known a man take so long to learn a simple little speech as you do. I don't think you know it even now."

"Accept the congratulations . . ." mumbled the Vice-Chamberlain, ignoring the Lord Warden's remarks, "accept the congratulations . . . a prosperous reign . . . a united people . . ."

"One minute to eight," said the Lord Warden.

"I think you must be a little fast," suggested Frau von Potzheim; "I say two minutes to."

"Kindly allow me to know best, dear Frau von Potzheim," said the Lord Warden sharply. "It is now eight o'clock, exactly."

Frau von Potzheim stepped forward and knocked loudly on the bedchamber door. There was a silence. She knocked again.

"Come in!" called a little voice from the other side.

Frau von Potzheim opened the door, and the three of them walked reverently into the half-darkened room. The Vice-Chamberlain strode across the carpet and drew back the curtains with a flourish. The morning light poured in through the big windows.

"Good-morning!" said King Timothy politely, raising himself on one elbow, and rubbing his eyes. The bed in which he lay, beautifully carved and inlaid with ivory, was of such gigantic proportions that he seemed almost lost in it.

"Your Majesty, good-morning!" said the Lord Warden, bowing low. "It is my privilege most humbly to congratulate you on this auspicious occasion. To-day, the twelfth anniversary of your birth, is the first birthday you have celebrated since you ascended the throne amid the plaudits of your people. May it be but the first of many! May you live long, and reign gloriously!"

"Your Majesty . . . accept the congratulations . . . a prosperous people . . . a united reign . . ." mumbled the Vice-Chamberlain.

The Lord Warden gave him an angry glance.

"Thank you all very much," said King Timothy, with a sleepy smile.

He was a little boy, and he looked very much like other little boys do when they have just wakened. His yellow hair was tousled; his blue eyes only half open; his mouth continually expanding into copious yawns.

"Your salts, dearie!" said Frau von Potzheim, approaching him with her silver goblet.

"O, Potzy!" cried King Timothy reproachfully. "That foul stuff on my birthday!"

"Drink it up!" wheedled Potzy.

"We shall wait upon your Majesty later," announced the Lord Warden tactfully, and together with the Vice-Chamberlain he withdrew.

"O, Potzy!" cried King Timothy; "I do hate it so."

"Be a lamb!" said Potzy; "I've got a chocolate waiting for you in my pocket."

King Timothy, Sovereign of Meikleburg and the Southern Plains, drank his effervescing saline. Then, with a little shudder at the distastefulness of it, sprang out of bed, dressed himself quickly in his velvet suit, and made his way to breakfast.

"It's my birthday to-day," he said pleasantly to a flunkey at the door. The flunkey, who had been brought up to look as much as possible like a waxwork, took no notice.

King Timothy sat down to his meal. He breakfasted each morning in solitary state, in a private room, with the Lord Warden and the Vice-Chamberlain looking on at a respectful distance.

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"Your Excellency," asked King Timothy as he buttered himself a slice of toast, "what have I got to do to-day?"

The Lord Warden laughed deprecatingly.

"Your Majesty knows quite well it is not a question of 'got,'" he replied. "Nevertheless," he continued, "the Army would feel deeply gratified were you to attend the Parade which has been arranged for eleven o'clock to celebrate your anniversary."

"I see," said King Timothy sadly. He could think of many nicer ways of spending the morning. "And will the rest of the day be a holiday, then?"

"Your Majesty has evidently forgotten the little tea-party you are holding this afternoon," answered the Lord Warden. "And to-night your uncle, Prince Heinrich, is looking forward to meeting you at the Birthday Banquet."

"Oh, dear!" sighed King Timothy. That wasn't his idea of a birthday at all. "Your Excellency," he asked suddenly, "aren't there any presents for me to-day?"

"Your Majesty can have little idea of your people's love, to ask such a question," smiled the Lord Warden. "Gifts have come from every part of the country, and they are awaiting your inspection in the throne-room." He paused impressively. "The Vice-Chamberlain will attend you there."

King Timothy jumped up in excitement. His eyes kindled. "Come on, Vice-Chamberlain!" he cried. And he ran out of the room as fast as he could go, and up the great wide stairs to the throne-room two at a time. The Vice-Chamberlain hurried after, puffing hard.

"Come on!" cried King Timothy, running on ahead; "I want to see my presents!"

Puffing and blowing, the Vice-Chamberlain arrived outside the throne-room to find His Majesty dancing madly in the ante-chamber.

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"It's all locked up!" shouted King Timothy in an agony of impatience. "Do hurry!"

The poor fat Vice-Chamberlain paused to wipe his brow. Then, ponderously selecting a large key from the bunch he carried, he unlocked the gilded doors. With a hideous creaking of unoiled hinges they swung slowly open and King Timothy darted through.

He looked quickly round the room; then bit his lip in disappointment. He could scarcely believe his eyes. The place was filled with the most strange and unbirthday-like objects. Never had he seen such an unsatisfactory collection.

The Vice-Chamberlain was consulting his notebook.

"The birthday offerings of a loyal and united people," he was muttering; "a happy augury for a prosperous reign!"

That was it, then. This fantastical accumulation of pottery, furniture, basket-work, textiles, lumps of gold and silver ore—these were his presents! Gifts from all the various industries of the country. King Timothy decided he must do his best not to cry. Yet what a disappointment!

He remembered sadly his last birthday, and all the lovely presents that had been given him then. . . . But that was before the old King had died, before he himself had become King. Last year his father had given him a pony and a railway set.

"But haven't I got any *proper* presents?" he asked in a choked little voice.

The Vice-Chamberlain waddled over to a corner of the room, ignoring King Timothy's question.

"Here," he announced, laying his fat hand on a bale of cloth, "we have half a mile of the best quality worsted, sent by the weavers of Meikleburg to tell of their devotion."

"But haven't I any *proper* presents?" repeated King Timothy in despair.

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"All your presents are here, your Majesty," replied the Vice-Chamberlain, and continued his inventory. "These two armchairs, at once sightly and luxurious, testify to the loyalty of the furniture-workers of Neustadt. These bales of wool come from the humble shepherds of the Southern Plains. . . ."

The Vice-Chamberlain was still mumbling, but King Timothy was too sick at heart to heed him. Nothing to play with! Nothing to eat! Why were people so silly as to give him things like these?

Very quietly he crept out of the room, and hurried along to the royal bedchamber. He buried his yellow head in an embroidered cushion and burst silently into tears.

By ten o'clock the citizens were already beginning to gather in the Great Square, where the military Parade was to be held. They had come to see the bright uniforms, hear the stirring music, and, above all, to see their little King. They stood waiting good-humouredly in the hot sun, chattering eagerly to one another. What uniform would he be wearing? Would he take the salute? Had he grown very much since they saw him at the coronation?

As they were talking, Prince Heinrich came riding past on his way to the Palace. The citizens recognised him, and let forth a mighty cheer.

"Long live Prince Heinrich!" they cried, throwing their hats into the air.

Prince Heinrich smiled his acknowledgments. Over six feet tall, his face bronzed with countless years' campaigning in southern wars, he looked a splendid figure as he rode past in the morning sunlight. He wore the uniform of the Imperial Hussars, and the crowd renewed their shouting as they recognised his great bay charger to be none other than

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the famous Lili—whom tradition said had borne him when he led the attack on General du Pré's forces nearly ten years ago.

Prince Heinrich turned out of the Square, down the Königsstrasse, and, dismounting in the Palace courtyard, made his way up to the royal apartment, preceded by two flunkys. In the Blue Room he encountered Frau von Potzheim.

"Hullo, Potzy!" he said cheerily. "Where's that scamp Timothy?"

"I'm sure I don't know, your Highness," replied Potzy somewhat stiffly.

"You're a pretty little thing," said Prince Heinrich, "and I like you. Do go and find King Timothy for me."

Potzy went out with an offended look, searched here and there, and at last, going into the royal bedchamber, found King Timothy, his head buried in an embroidered cushion, quietly crying.

"Why, there's a lamb!" said Potzy. "What is it, then?"

"Nothing," sobbed King Timothy, getting up very quickly.

"Why, there's a duck!" said Potzy. "What is it?"

"Nothing," sobbed King Timothy. "At least, not much." He wiped the tears off his cheeks. "My father gave me a pony and a little railway last birthday," he said; "but now I'm King I don't get any proper presents." And he started to cry again.

"You mustn't do that," said Potzy, putting her arms round him. "Uncle Heinrich is here, and wants to see you. Whatever will he think if he finds you crying, and you a great big boy too!"

"I don't care what he thinks," answered King Timothy. But he stopped crying, and dried his eyes.

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"That's right," said Potzy. "And remember, you ought to be proud that all the poor people spend their money to give you presents."

"Well, I'll try to be," said King Timothy, and he ran downstairs to find Uncle Heinrich.

Ten minutes later he was back again.

"Uncle Heinrich's very nice," he said to Potzy, "but he's forgotten all about a present. Now I've got to get you to help me on with that red uniform, and then I'll just have time to go down to the pond to feed my fishes, and then I've got to meet Uncle and a lot of Hussars in the courtyard, and we're all going to ride to the Parade together, Uncle Heinrich says."

"That will be nice!" cried Potzy.

"Well, I'd rather play in the garden," sighed King Timothy.

The Palace gardens were so big that they kept five gardeners busy. There were wide lawns, fine avenues of limes, acres of flowers. Right at the bottom, within a few yards of the boundary wall, lay the fishpond; and through its shallow waters rare gold and silver fishes swam hither and thither—now in sunlight, now in the shadow of the overhanging willow trees. The whole garden, indeed, was so lovely that even the English Ambassador, who found no good in anything foreign, had been heard to praise it.

King Timothy, dressed as a general of the Imperial Hussars, made his way at a quick trot down a gravel walk to the pond. In his hand he held two slices of Madeira cake, which, as was customary, he intended to distribute to the fishes for their breakfast.

He reached the bank, and recognising a particularly ugly silver fish as an old friend, called out a cheerful good-morning.

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The fish ignored him. Then, as he began to crumble up some cake and cast it on the waters, a most unusual thing happened.

There was an enormous splash, and he saw a red rubber ball bobbing about on the surface of the pond.

"Perhaps it's a bomb!" thought King Timothy, who had heard something about Anarchist plots. He waited timidly for it to explode.

But nothing of the sort happened. Instead, a little boy appeared on the top of the garden wall, and clambered down into the garden.

"Hi! What are you doing?" cried King Timothy.

"I'm after my ball," the intruder announced. "Have you seen it?"

"Do you mean the bomb?" asked King Timothy.

"Oh, there it is!" said the intruder, as he caught sight of it floating in the pond. And then, for the first time, he caught sight of King Timothy also. "Oh, my goodness!" he cried, recognising him. "Oh, my goodness!" He fell down on his knees. "I didn't mean no harm, your Majesty, really I didn't."

King Timothy eyed him with interest.

"What are you sucking?" he inquired.

"Please, your Majesty, it's a bull's-eye," sobbed the other. "I didn't mean no harm."

"Have you any more?" asked King Timothy.

The little intruder nodded.

"Give me one," said King Timothy. "There's a sport!"

The little intruder scrambled to his feet. He drew out a paper bag from a pocket of his ragged coat.

"They're jolly good," he confided. "My auntie gave me them for my birthday to-day."

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"It's my birthday too," said King Timothy proudly, as he put a bull's-eye into his mouth.

"I know," replied the other. "My name's Prince, and they called me that because I was born on the same day as you were. I expect you had much better presents than me, though," he added sorrowfully.

"Oh, yes!" agreed King Timothy, trying hard to remember what the Vice-Chamberlain had said. "Much better. The birthday offerings of a loyal and united people!"

"I say!" exclaimed Prince in admiration. "What sort of things did you have?"

"Well, I had a bale of wool," said King Timothy rather lamely, "and I had two armchairs. Oh, and lots of other things."

"A bale of wool! My goodness!" cried Prince. "I call that a feeble sort of present."

"So do I," admitted King Timothy, feeling rather afraid that he was going to cry again. "Now I'm King they don't give me anything decent."

"And whoever wants a couple of armchairs!" exclaimed Prince. "You can't even eat 'em!"

"I know," said King Timothy, bursting into tears. "I haven't had anything decent."

"Have another bull's-eye," said Prince sympathetically; "or take the bagful. It must be swineish being king."

King Timothy took the bag gratefully.

"I'll have to go back now," he said, "or I shall be late for the Parade. I must just feed my fishes first. I don't know what they'd do without me. I give them their breakfast every morning and their supper every evening." He distributed the cake. "Good-bye!" he said, "you'll be able to get your ball with a stick."

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He set off to the Palace.

“ So long ! ” called Prince.

As the hour of the Parade approached, the crowds in the Great Square grew denser and denser. At the windows of the big houses crowded rich ladies in their best bonnets, and rich gentlemen in their best waistcoats. On the pavements below swarmed the poorer people, jostling each other good-humouredly in their almost child-like excitement and impatience for the events to come. Hardly a citizen who wasn't there; not one that had to stay away but regretted his absence.

Soon in the distance could be heard the rousing strains of the Birthday March. The Hussars were riding out from the Palace and along the Königstrasse. At last the column came into sight, and when it was seen that at their head rode King Timothy and Prince Heinrich side by side—King Timothy on his little pony, Prince Heinrich on the great bay charger Lili—the crowd yelled until even the brass band was drowned, and the windows of the houses rattled as though an earthquake had visited the city.

Then King Timothy and Uncle Heinrich trotted to the centre of the Square to take the salute as the troops marched past. The Hussars took up their station behind them, as Royal Bodyguard.

“ Will it last long ? ” asked King Timothy sadly.

“ Afraid so, Timmy,” answered Prince Heinrich. “ But we mustn't disappoint all these people, must we ? ”

There came again the sound of music. The drums began to beat in Königstrasse. The sharp tread of well-drilled soldiers was heard. Whole regiments from every part of the country were moving up to join in the celebrations.

King Timothy manœuvred a bull's-eye into the corner of

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his cheek and raised his hand to his helmet in a salute. The drums sounded nearer, more urgently. The march past had begun.

First came the Imperial Guard, the flower of all the army. A faultless company of men, intimately in step. They swung down the Königstrasse through the Square, fifty scarlet bandsmen followed by five hundred scarlet soldiers. Trumpeter Feldstein and Trumpeter Schmidt looked at each other out of the corners of their eyes every now and then, but now there were no mistakes. Private Gregor had a stone in his boot, but marched manfully. Sergeant-Major Liebel strutted along at the head of his detachment barking out orders with such ferocity that the whole neighbourhood echoed to his voice. The crowd waved their hats and handkerchiefs, cheering like mad.

"I'm getting so tired," whispered King Timothy. Uncle Heinrich did not hear.

Half-an-hour went past. Battalion after battalion came swinging by in their bright uniforms. The scarlet of the Imperial Guard had given place to the green tunics of the Meikleburg Garrison. Fifes and trumpets were at soldiers' lips, playing the grand old regimental marches of earlier days. The sharp military tread, the pulse of drums, re-echoed round the houses.

Still the crowd cheered. Still the regiments came marching. The green tunics of the Meikleburg Garrison were followed by the smart grey of the Volunteers. Young ladies threw flowers down from the windows to the passing officers. An hour had passed; an hour and a quarter.

"Oh, Uncle!" said King Timothy; "I am so tired. I don't think I can keep my hand at the salute any longer."

"Be a soldier!" whispered Prince Heinrich. "Be a soldier!"

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With a little cry King Timothy fell forward across the neck of his pony. He had fainted.

"There's dreadful news!" cried the young man in white overalls running up to Monsieur Blanc. "His Majesty fainted at the Parade and they've put him to bed."

"*Diable!*" cried Monsieur Blanc. "Does that mean that the tea-party will be cancelled?"

"Ah, dear Monsieur Blanc, I fear so!" said the young man. "And what is to become of all your beautiful meringues and éclairs?"

"What indeed?" echoed the royal chef in a melancholy voice, as he eyed the hundreds of fragile creamy cakes he had spent so much time preparing. "It's all the fault of these beastly soldiers too! I believe they did it on purpose. They take His Majesty out into the hot sun to make him look at their silly antics and then he faints and they have to put him to bed. *Diable!* That's not what birthdays are made for. Birthdays, my dear Fritz, are made for eating!"

The young man nodded in agreement.

"They talk about the art of war," continued Monsieur Blanc angrily, "but it's nothing compared to the art of cooking. Just look at those cakes there! What delicate flavours! It takes twenty years of effort and experience to learn how to make a cream bun, my dear Fritz. A man puts his whole soul into his pastries! They don't realise that when they talk about cancelling tea-parties at the last moment!"

He paused in his outburst. The Lord Warden had come into the kitchen.

"Ahem!" said the Lord Warden.

"What is this I hear?" cried Monsieur Blanc furiously, approaching him. "You have no use for my dainty puffs,

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eh? My biscuits can go hang, for all you care? That's it, is it?"

"Ahem!" said the Lord Warden.

"Oh, yes!" continued Monsieur Blanc explosively. "The soldiers have a Parade, do they? General von Booby wants to show off, does he? And then there's fainting, is there? And tea-parties are cancelled, are they? Well, and what am I going to do with my cakes, and my pastries, and my biscuits, I should like to know? A man doesn't spend a fortnight creating pretty things for von Booby to make fun of!"

"I see that you are already acquainted with the intelligence I came to convey," said the Lord Warden gravely. "Dr. Brandenburg considers it essential that His Majesty should keep to his room. The tea-party has been cancelled."

He turned to go.

"Hi! Come back!" shouted Monsieur Blanc. "And how about the Birthday Banquet to-night?"

"Dr. Brandenburg considers that His Majesty will be well enough by this evening to attend the Banquet," announced the Lord Warden. "The Banquet will therefore proceed as planned."

He turned again, and walked to the door. Then, suddenly recalling something, he hurried back.

"Dear Monsieur Blanc," he said; "you won't forget my long-standing affection for your cheese sauces, will you?"

"And how are you feeling now?" inquired Dr. Brandenburg archly, as he stood by the royal bedside three or four hours later.

"I'm feeling better, thank you," said King Timothy, yawning. He had just finished a long sleep.

The doctor turned to the Vice-Chamberlain and Frau von Potzheim, who stood together by the door.

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"The tongue is clean," he said. "The temperature is normal. The pulse is satisfactory."

"There's a little soldier!" cried Frau von Potzheim. "And will he be able to get up for the Banquet to-night?"

"I think so," replied Dr. Brandenburg; "I should not advise that His Majesty partakes of the more elaborate dishes; but he is quite well."

"Oh, but I'd much rather stay in bed," said King Timothy. "I don't enjoy banquets very much, I'm afraid."

"The tongue is clean," said Dr. Brandenburg; "temperature and pulse are as they should be. It would perhaps be a pity for His Majesty to disappoint his guests."

"Quite out of the question, if I may say so, your Majesty," remarked the Vice-Chamberlain, stepping forward. "Your guests must come before all personal considerations. At the same time I should like to convey the heartfelt condolences of a loyal and united people at the unhappy contingency which denied them your loved presence during the latter part of this morning's celebration."

"Potzy," said King Timothy, "what's a condolence?"

"He means that everybody is very sorry you've been ill," explained Potzy.

"They are very kind," murmured King Timothy.

"The Lord Mayor of Meikleburg sends the following message," announced the Vice-Chamberlain: "'On behalf of the citizens of Meikleburg may I express the concern and consternation which has been aroused in every breast by your Majesty's untimely indisposition? The city sincerely wishes your Majesty a speedy restoration.'"

"Does the Lord Mayor also mean he's sorry I've been ill?" asked King Timothy.

"Yes, my lamb," said Potzy. "Everyone's ever so sorry. Now we'll go away, and you must get up. The Lord

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Warden says you are to wear your Admiral's uniform to-night."

The Doctor and the Vice-Chamberlain bowed themselves out, and Potzy followed them. King Timothy climbed slowly out of bed, and went into his dressing-room next door. The uniform was laid out, and a valet was waiting, with immense respect, to help him dress.

"Isn't it funny!" said King Timothy. "I'm a soldier in the morning, and a sailor in the evening! And I'm not either really, you know."

After that the dressing continued in silence, except that every now and then the valet would say: "Your Majesty looks a proper figure, if I may say so." King Timothy didn't quite understand him, so he didn't reply.

"Well, I'm an admiral now!" remarked King Timothy at last, looking at himself in a mirror. "How long is there before I must go and meet my guests?"

"Half-an-hour, your Majesty."

"Then I'm going down to feed my fishes," said King Timothy. "They haven't had any supper yet. Besides, they haven't ever seen me in this uniform before." And he ran from the room, down the stairs, out into the garden.

As he hurried across the wide lawns, his sword clinking at his side, his cocked hat crammed down over his ears, he could hear a busy hum proceeding from the kitchens, and, more faintly, the sound of the Hussars playing the guests welcome in the courtyard in the front. Soon the sounds faded in the distance, and when he reached the long avenue of limes all he could hear was the breeze among the boughs, and an occasional thrush piping his evening melody.

Arrived at the pond he took out his slices of cake and began to distribute them to the darting fishes.

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"I say!" said a voice; "that *is* a nice uniform!" And the next moment Prince, covered in leaves and earth, crawled out from a nearby shrubbery.

"Whatever are you doing here?" gasped King Timothy. "Have you lost your ball again?"

"No, it isn't that," said Prince, speaking very fast and shyly. "It's only I've been thinking, and I thought it couldn't be much fun to have a birthday and no decent presents or anything, and having to do what you're told all day, so I told some of my friends, and we've been thinking, and we thought—well, as we'd been saving up for nothing in particular except some catapults they've got in Ullstein's, which aren't much good anyway, we thought—well, we thought you might like these!" Then, as though he were rather ashamed of himself, he felt in his pocket and produced a bag of marbles. "They aren't much good, I'm afraid," he said, apologetically, handing them to King Timothy. "I mean, they're quite round, you know, but the colours aren't much good, I'm afraid."

King Timothy took the bag gratefully.

"They're not bad, though," added Prince as an after-thought.

"Thanks *awfully*," said King Timothy. "They're marvelous!"

"I say!" remarked Prince, suddenly, as though anxious to change the subject. "That hat of yours would make a frightfully good boat, wouldn't it?"

"Let's try!" cried King Timothy, taking it off with enthusiasm.

The two boys knelt down by the edge of the pond, and without further ceremony the new boat was launched. It rode the tide with all the assurance of a battleship.

"I expect they give admirals hats like that so they can

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save themselves if their ship sinks," said King Timothy, laughing for the first time that day.

Prince gave a little cry.

"I say! It's sinking! What fun! They'll all be drowned!"

Slowly, and with indescribable dignity, the cocked hat disappeared beneath the surface of the waters.

"I wonder what my fishes make of it," said King Timothy in a curious voice.

"His Majesty has disappeared!"

The Lord Warden ran up to Prince Heinrich in alarm.

"His Majesty has disappeared!"

"Nonsense!" cried Prince Heinrich. "Nonsense! Send a flunkey upstairs to his bedroom."

"We've looked everywhere, your Highness!" trembled the Lord Warden. "He can't be found! Already, the Banquet is delayed ten minutes!"

"I'll find him!" said Prince Heinrich shortly. He strode up the wide stairs, and down the long corridor to the royal bedchamber.

"Where's the King?" he asked Potzy.

"I've looked everywhere," wailed Potzy, "and I can't come by him!"

"Excuse me, your Highness," articulated the valet, approaching to a respectful distance, and giving a low bow, "but I heard His Majesty say he was going down to feed the fish."

Prince Heinrich turned without a word, strode downstairs again, and out into the garden. He made his way across the lawns, down the avenue of limes, and at last arrived within sight of the fishpond. He paused, glancing anxiously to right and left.

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Whatever he may have expected to see he cannot have expected a more extraordinary, and yet a more commonplace, sight than in fact met his eyes. On the flagstones down by the pond two little boys were playing marbles. One of them was King Timothy. The other one Prince Heinrich had not seen before.

At that moment Prince Heinrich became aware of an unusual sound. King Timothy was laughing.

Prince Heinrich pondered.

"I don't hear that sound often enough," he thought gravely. Then he turned quietly on his heel and made his way back to the Palace. "I don't hear that sound often enough," he thought again, as he walked up the avenue of limes.

"Well?" asked the Lord Warden anxiously, running up to him as he entered the Palace.

"What a lot of fuss about nothing!" smiled Prince Heinrich. "His Majesty is keeping to his room this evening, after all. The sun was very hot at the Parade, and we mustn't take risks with His Majesty's health, must we? I myself shall take his place at the Banquet."

The Lord Warden, with great relief, hurried off to make the necessary arrangements. In five minutes time the exalted guests were filing into the Banqueting Hall—expressing regret to one another that the little King would not be with them, but determined none the less to make the best of a good meal.

"Never could stand these damned continental dishes!" the English ambassador was heard to remark. "Plain roast beef for a plain Englishman is my motto!" He made the same remark at every Banquet he attended.

Grace was spoken. The guests sat down. The great Banquet had begun.

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Meanwhile dusk was closing in over the lawns and walks of the palace garden. Birds were silent; the breeze had dropped. The stillness was only broken by loud shouts and bursts of laughter from the neighbourhood of the fishpond.

"I don't think admirals are much good at marbles," said Prince, rudely; "I've won every time."

"I've never played before," said King Timothy, "but I'll beat you one day."

"Well, so long!" said Prince, "I must be getting home to supper."

He clambered over the garden wall and dropped down into the road outside.

"So long!" he called again.

"So long!" called King Timothy. "I'll make you Prime Minister when I grow up!"

He stuffed his marbles into the pocket of his uniform, and set off towards the Palace. He walked slowly. It was almost dark. The moon was rising over the Palace roof.

"What a funny sort of birthday I've had!" thought King Timothy to himself. "I'm feeling dreadfully happy."

*Nelson's Coffin*¹

FOR some time after the death of her great friend Nelson, the victor of the Nile, the beautiful Lady Hamilton refrained from taking a new lover. Rather did she what every woman does when she has decided to be true to the last one: she counted his predecessors.

Invariably, as she did so, she miscounted. Arithmetic had never been her strong suit; and, even when she had recourse to her hands, first bending the fingers of her right hand back with the left, one by one, dreamily and delicately, then, passing to the second series, those of the left hand with her right—even when she did this it did not help very much. First of all, it was so easy to fall into a reverie at every second or third of her friends, whereupon she of necessity forgot how far she had advanced in her tally. Moreover, however careful she might be in totalling her score, she had after all only two hands and ten fingers. Not quite enough, unfortunately.

Well, luckily the old Duke of Queensberry, her country neighbour, also had two hands, making with hers twenty fingers all told. That was at all events something. Old Q., facing her as she sat by the small work-table on which lay her

¹ Translated from the German by Sir Harry Luke.

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embroidery frame, listened with all ears (he had become rather hard of hearing from much shooting) to the amorous recollections of the beautiful Emma. It was evident that his keen sportsman's eye was following a trail.

At what precise moment does a woman's heart begin to glow? His charming neighbour should tell him.

So he asked his question, his weather-beaten old face well forward over the table covered with wool, but Lady Hamilton, lovely under her coquettishly perched widow's cap, did not answer immediately. Carefully she picked out from the heap of different coloured threads the particular shade she required, held the one she had chosen critically against the fire, and said demurely :

"It varies so much."

But the Duke wanted to know more.

"Is it courting that does the trick," he asked eagerly, as he thrust his enormous jaw farther and farther forward, "or is it brute force?"

"That, too, perhaps," murmured Emma softly, deep in her recollections; "but neither is that the true answer. The true answer is the inward decision. If I were a man, that is the only thing that would give me satisfaction."

"The inward decision! But how is that arrived at?"

"That varies, too," she gave him to understand. "Sometimes it happens at once, often not for years. Sometimes it may come in the arms of another man."

"How interesting! And one is then informed, I presume, of the—of the inward decision?"

"One is never informed," said Lady Hamilton to the sexagenarian, in the patient, the indulgent tone in which a teacher endeavours to initiate her infant pupil into the multiplication table. "But one becomes aware of it."

"Oh, one becomes aware of it?"

"Yes," she said, "sooner or later"; and she interrupted her work to hold the tabouret a little away from her with a critical smile. The pattern was a leaping stag, and she was just working on his antlers. Not unnaturally, perhaps, this part of the design brought to her mind her husband, poor William Hamilton, and the thought of him, again, induced her to ask her guest :

"Have I ever told you the story of Lord Nelson's coffin?"

"Never," answered the Duke, tactfully lowering his eyes with an expression that was characteristic of him. "As it happens, you have not mentioned Nelson to me at all."

In point of fact he was delighted that she was about to do so, because he felt it to be a sign of increasing confidence. And, as he watched her take the pale pink thread, on which she had decided, and with a smile work it into the embroidery, he added : "I thought that in his case it was the Battle of the Nile which brought your—inward decision to fruition."

"Possibly. The coffin, the Nile, the victory over Napoleon and the decision; all of these things hung together." And she proceeded to tell the story.

"Twice Nelson came to us in Naples. The first time, five years previously, a pleasant young man with two eyes, two arms and charming manners. A Captain. The second time, an Admiral, one-eyed, one-armed, but Napoleon's conqueror. Aboukir was behind him, and ahead of him——"

"—the bridal couch of Naples?"

"—a reception in Naples such as there had never been before, in which I was privileged to play my part," said the ex-Ambadress in the tone of an official historical record. And proudly she continued :

"We sailed—the King, the Queen, and the whole Court—almost as far as Capri to meet the victorious English fleet on its arrival. The sea was a silvery blue; the royal barge,

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in which I sat, was a tent of purple rustling with silk; the other boats were all in festal array, hung with carpets and covered with flowers. It was a *corteo*, as the Italians call such ceremonial processions, and never have I participated in one more festive, more splendid. Three hundred Neapolitan churches were ringing their bells without ceasing, the guns were thundering from Santa Lucia, there were bonfires on all the towers, columns of smoke rose in the air and my heart was beating. The Queen sat next to me and kept on whispering that I must bring about the alliance with England, on which she had set her heart. She counted on me, the more so as Nelson was to stay with us at the Legation. And now the fleet could be discerned on the horizon, looking at first like a mass of white butterflies; already the flagship had seen us—had seen me, as I fondly imagined. The Admiral's flag flew at the mizen. There roared a salute like the belling of a rutting stag and, since we in our pleasure-barge had no mortar with which to return it, we answered with a fanfare on silver bugles, which Cimarosa had arranged and was conducting from the stern, waving his arms in solemn and magnificent fashion."

"A fanfare in reply to guns—how Neapolitan!" muttered the Duke.

"The barge now came alongside the flagship. Nelson stood at the top of the ladder to receive us, bowing with deep respect, his cocked hat under his arm. As soon as I saw him I lost my head and, forgetful of etiquette, ran up the gangway ahead of everyone and threw myself, under the very eyes of my husband and of Their Majesties, on to the conqueror's shoulder. His one arm went around me, his one eye looked at me like a misty star, and his cocked hat rolled at my feet."

"Naturally, since he had only one arm," interjected Old Q. with true English realism.

"And then, you see," proceeded Lady Hamilton, much moved, "there took possession of me such pity for this poor wreck of a man that—yes, that——"

"The inward decision——?"

"—that I was so carried away that I kissed the fresh bandage on his hero's forehead," she continued, restraining his impatience, "and nobody laughed."

"Nor would I have laughed," said the Duke quite seriously. "After all, he was the liberator of England; indeed, he was the saviour of Europe."

"That was everybody's opinion, and it was made manifest in the homage which was now poured on Nelson from all sides. How universal this was we could gauge when he took us—the King, the Queen, my husband and myself—down to his cabin, where there were displayed some, but by no means all, of the presents which he had received after the battle from every part of Europe. Beside the gold medal of the King of England and the sword with diamond-studded hilt from the City of London, lay the gifts of the Sultan and the Sultana-Mother, an aigrette of diamonds with the *Chelenk* and a snuff-box inlaid with precious stones; close by was a casket full of jewels from the Tsar of Russia, a service of solid gold from the Levant Company and a wonderful gold chain from the town of Palermo. Naturally, too, the King of Naples did not come on board empty-handed; he proffered a sword scintillating with gems that had come down to him from the estate of Louis XIV and whose value my husband put at five millions. And one's eyes watered at the sight of the many other trophies. Yet the most remarkable of all these gifts was a massive coffin that lay right across the table."

"A coffin?" Under the table Queensberry's right knee began to shake quite noticeably.

"Yes, Nelson's coffin. Perhaps you know the story. It

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was made out of the oak of the mainmast of the 'Orient,' the French battleship blown up at the Battle of Aboukir. Captain Hallywell, one of Nelson's officers, salvaged the mast from the floating wreckage and had a coffin fashioned out of its timbers. It was constructed entirely of the oak of the mast, and the nails and the bands that kept it together were made only of its metal; no other material whatever was allowed to be used. When the coffin was ready, Hallywell sent it to his adored Admiral with a letter in which he begged that, when the time came, he would allow himself to be buried in his own trophy. This was entirely to Nelson's taste; and it was with the utmost pride that he showed us his final resting-place, which lay unadorned amid all the gold and those glistening jewels, also by opening the lid and allowing me to look shuddering into the gloomy interior of this sinister receptacle which had become his constant companion. Nothing could have been more gay than his expression as he did so, his eye never leaving me; but I was sadly discomposed by this glimpse into the depths on such a day of rejoicing. I was moved to tears.

"By this time we had approached the harbour and the cheers of the crowds sounded ever louder, ever louder boomed the salutes, while the bells pealed as if the whole town were in flames. Never had a hero been thus acclaimed; and never had he stood so close to his own grave. That in such a moment he could smile at me in forgetfulness of everything else was, I felt, the most wonderful declaration of love that a man could make. At the same time there came over me the deepest pity for him, for myself and for all of us whom one day the coffin must claim. And in that moment I made up my mind that, if I could not snatch my dear one from death, I would at all events make his coffin beautiful in his lifetime."

"Make his coffin beautiful?" The Duke's left knee, too, was perceptibly trembling now.

"Yes. But I said nothing for the moment. All I did was to give orders, with Nelson's approval, that the presents, including the coffin, should be conveyed to our house, for as I have told you, it had been arranged that he was to stay at the Legation. It was the Queen's wish, and my husband had no objection, although he knew my feelings for Nelson and his for me. He could not help feeling honoured, as an Englishman, that the victor of Aboukir should be his guest."

"I should have felt honoured too," said Queensberry; "a hero is a hero for all that. But—what about the inward decision? Were you not going to tell me how you arrived at that?"

"But I *have* told you. Only you did not notice it. Well, never mind; Nelson did not notice it either. He noticed nothing at all until late at night, when he came home from a long political discussion with the Queen and went to the bedroom I had prepared for him. All his presents had been arranged there, even the coffin; and in the coffin there lay—now, what do you think?"

"Louis Quatorze's diamond-hilted sword?"

"No. I."

"You?"

"Yes, in my white silk dress with the red cashmere shawl and the deep golden sash, just as Romney painted me"; and she pointed to the picture above the mantelpiece.

The Duke blinked up at the portrait. "But how had you room in that full skirt?" he asked.

"Everything is made on a comfortable scale in England: dresses, gloves and even coffins. Moreover, I had placed the coffin on end with the head slightly raised, so that everything might tell."

"Everything?"

"I assumed that it was so, for, as Nelson lighted himself in

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from the next room and saw, at the foot of his bed, his last resting-place converted into a living picture, he dropped his candle in sudden alarm. But it was a sweet alarm, as he confessed to me in the dark a little later."

As she concluded her tale Lady Hamilton drew the last thread out of the antlers. The Duke was silent; and slowly, but steadily, the expression on his weather-beaten, cheerful old sportsman's face changed from horror to one of very definite enlightenment. "Oh, so that is how it was——" he said, finally comprehending.

Lady Hamilton assumed a melancholy air. "That is how it was," she whispered sorrowfully, sunk in reminiscences of the past. And then, with a sudden movement, she put the frame firmly aside and said in an altered and, as it seemed to the Duke, an entirely new tone :

"And now, my dear Duke, will you please withdraw your knees, so that I can rise; for I must really get up if you are going to do me the honour, as I trust you are, of dining with me to-night."

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Amiable Confessions

I. Escape into Prose

I BEGAN to write to escape from failure in another art. This is not a bid for sympathy; the failure was deserved. My attempt upon the degree of Mus.Bac.Oxon. was made in order to gratify a natural uppishness and wish to be different. Proof that music itself meant and means very little to me is easily offered; during the past five years I have lived close to Queen's Hall, and have entered it perhaps half a dozen times.

I am able now, sixteen years after, to see as a stranger that young person who went up to Oxford in 1919. She wore, for economy partly, the dark blue uniform of the W.R.N.S., its brass buttons transmuted to non-committal black; this with an eyeglass. She was full of self-confidence; had intelligence, which thus far had only been put to the narrowest tests; and was consumed with a passion to be noticed and admired. All sorts of devices, some laughable, were pressed into this latter service. Even the monocle served its turn; it became an insignia so personal that one astigmatic fresher who really needed a single glass was advised by her compeers to ask permission of Miss Simpson before she wore it. The permission was accorded. Miss Simpson ceremonially smashed her own

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glass against the mantelpiece that night, and never used one after.

What school was such a personage to take? I had no mathematics, and could never have passed Responsions, to which sesame all the main schools opened. Without it only the Geography and French diplomas offered, or their even less distinguished opposite number, the diploma in Economics. I could not contemplate these. Ranging about among possibilities, I discovered that the Music School accepted candidates who could pass its own special Preliminary in English and two other languages. This I could manage. Lenient examiners passed me, and there I was, set up and swaggering as the only woman of my year taking the degree in music.

So far, good. Now came the uneasy realisation that I was perfectly ignorant of everything save what Dr. Johnson called the alphabet of music, the clefs and the relationship of the notes. I could not play the piano properly, nor sing at sight. I had never seen an exercise in harmony in my life; the $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ symbols of a figured bass meant nothing whatever. I had no notion, even, of the compass of the human singing voice, let alone the capabilities of instruments. These were matters which the contrivers of the Music Prelim. did not attempt to ascertain concerning their candidates, rightly supposing that nobody would be such a fool as to tackle a difficult art without some grounding in its principles.

In one of Barrie's earlier books there is an incident which I may give here without irrelevance. Tommy, the poseur, pretends to have sprained his ankle; Grizel, the practical, sees through this pretence. He deliberately and privately bangs the door upon his foot, enduring the physical pain gladly as an alternative to confessing himself a sham.

I do not know how to convey the misery that must be undergone by a person who, wholly ignorant of music, and lacking

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any real love for it, pitches head-first into ten hours a day of it in order to gratify the instinct to show off. Aural training, for instance, the discipline which teaches immediate recognition of sounds and their relationship, can pervade the whole waking existence. You might hear at night a taxi hooting; A flat or A natural? It became necessary for your peace of mind to know. You slid out of bed and downstairs in the cold to the piano, carrying the horn note all the while in your head, and there, softly for fear of waking the house, tested your guess. The squeak of a shoe, the voice of a friend, the chink of a hammer—such sounds beset you and were at once translated, set down in black and white on a stave in your mind.

The written exercises were no easier. Often I could not tell what was expected of me when one was set; the guiding symbols were meaningless. I had to work out every bar with a piano, since I had no idea, during those first terms, how anything that I wrote would sound. Never once did the stuff I handed in look anything like other students' performances. Here comes the irony. I began to get a reputation for originality among my peers, who supposed that I simply would not be bothered with rules, while actually I was trying harder than any of them to be orthodox. I was in the position of a foreigner whose very unfamiliarity with the language he is using sometimes shows up an old idiom in a new light, and whose phrases make sense, though not always that which he thinks.

My tutor was not taken in. He never called me a fraud in so many words; indeed, he often, I believe, covered my ignorance from others. He may have suspected the truth, that I was putting in, to save my pride, a very great deal of hard work every day. But sometimes, nodding kindly over an exercise, he would say: "Yes, yes. But we have to think of the examiners; hide-bound fellows; their nerves won't stand

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much. And really, you know, some of these modulations of yours are very abrupt."

After a couple of terms I was beginning to get the hang of things, but still the patterns I made conveyed only their rhythm and tune correctly to my ear. Harmony baffled me. I could not then, and cannot now, contrive to hear clearly more than three parts moving at once. But in order to keep up that reputation for originality I had to show something now and then, and I hit, like the young man in the poem, on a strange device. I have wondered since that someone seeking an easy reputation has not developed it, and that I did not myself make more of it. Briefly, it was music written for the eye. You did landscapes, using the black notes as trees; demi-semi-quavers, with their many branches like lop-sided toy firs, served well here in groups. In a song-series, whose words were taken from Gautier's "Fantaisies d'Hiver," I remember one line—"les pas étoiles des oiseaux"—accompanied by triplets which looked in fact very like the marks of birds' feet. There were caricatures, done in minims and crotchets, and one work entitled "The Drowned Man," whose accompaniment consisted solely of semibreves floating from the bottom of the bass clef to the top of the treble, like great bubbles ascending. This nonsense I justified by copious quotations from Gautier and his theory of the transposing of arts. It went down well.

But such adventures in composition took time, and though I enjoyed such *réclame* as they brought me, I was not much nearer being a genuine musician when they were down in black and white; I knew it perfectly well, and was not bluffed by my own performances. Even when my tutor played two of my piano preludes at a public concert—goodness knows why, except that they were diabolically difficult and a challenge to virtuosity—I was not inwardly puffed up. It was the same feeling that I have had bringing off a preposterous bluff at

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poker, not so much pleased with myself as contemptuous of those who had allowed themselves to be taken in by me. But the months were passing; at the end of the academic year I was for it. Examiners would see through me. I knew that if I were set down with six ordinary questions in counterpoint to answer and no piano at my elbow I should simply make a fool of myself. I might have refused to sit for the first Mus.Bac. That would have been the honest course, but at this period I simply was not honest, and I could not bear the confession of failure that such a refusal implied. The only alternative—leaving aside such expedients as falling ill—was to fail deliberately, colossally, and with dash.

I began to plan for this two months before the examination. People all about me lamented their fate, wondered what class they would get. Amid this I alone was calm, mysteriously smiling, and intimating that I knew my fate already. "I shall plough." "What? Why?" "My dears, look at the people who are going to get through. Can't associate with them, even on a Results form." In this way it got about that I, through sheer impudence and for the matter of a pose, was going not to try. There was one bad moment when my tutor suddenly said, having heard this rumour, perhaps: "I hope you're taking this exam. seriously. I don't like my people to fail." This was hardly bearable, for I was fond of him, but my idiot *amour-propre* could see no other way out.

The papers, when I came to them at last, were humane, not academic, set to give scope to the candidates' imagination. The harmony paper, for instance, gave four lines of verse, and invited a setting for any combination of instruments. I thought out some nonsensical blend, bassoons and triangles let us say—it was not that, but I forget the exact absurdity—handed in my paper at the end of twenty minutes, and strolled out. The same with the counterpoint questions; I played the

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fool with them for twenty minutes, and wandered off to spend the rest of the afternoon in a punt. When the time came for the Viva, the examination by word of mouth, three beautifully robed gentlemen looked at me narrowly, and with great politeness asked me to tell them what harmonic series was to be obtained from the seventh position on the trombone. I knew this, and gave the answer correctly in order to puzzle them, and to show that my fooling with the questions on paper had been intentional. They let me go almost at once.

On the day when results were to be known I did not go near the Schools. "Oh, don't be so maddening! You must want to know!" "I do know. I've ploughed, as I had every intention of doing, and now I can get on with my novel in peace." "Novel! When on earth did you start thinking of that?" "About the beginning of this term, so I chucked the Mus.Bac. to get on with it." "How much have you done? When will it be finished?" "In three weeks."

I had not written a word of it. I had no plot, and no more notion of writing English than, a year back, I had had of music. But words, after all, are the omnibus in which we make our daily journeys of the mind, and I felt that I could string enough of them together to bear out my boast. I took the first plot that came to hand, therefore, and during three weeks of rain at St. Jean de Luz laboured at this self-imposed job. It was easy. It was simply giving body to the stories I was accustomed to tell myself to keep away fear of the dark. The actual writing out by hand of sixty-five thousand words is no light task, but my imagination endured none of the appalling blanknesses that had been used to come upon it when it roved in the unfamiliar fields of regimented sound. I was sorry when, on the last day of that rainy month, the story was done. Whether it was good or bad stuff of its kind I did not then know, but I despised it, I remember, for coming so easily;

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not having as yet enough experience of life to understand that, as Samuel Butler points out, most of the things an individual does best he does effortlessly, in a way that runs with, and not against, the grain of his aptitudes.

The book in typescript, my second flight from reality began to take something the curve of the first. For it was no good boasting that I had written a novel if there were to be nothing to show; print was the only proof of my feat worth offering. So there I was, on the horns of the same dilemma, with publishers' readers substituted for my previous board of examiners. But now there was this in my favour, that while an examiner's opinion must be made public, a publisher's need not; nor is one publisher's "No" binding upon all his fellows. I asked advice, and followed this by sending the script to Heinemann's. But among my friends I used the same tactics that before had spared me humiliation; deprecating the book, insisting that it would not be taken, that I had sent it in for a bet and so on. Mr. C. S. Evans has told me since that at one of the cocktail parties of the period his host greeted him: "I say, d'you know Helen Simpson?" "Never heard of her." "Well, anyway, she says she's just sent you in a damn bad book."

All these precautions of mine, these forestallings and mockings of failure, as it happened served no purpose. The novel was taken, and I don't know that I have ever been more surprised in my life. But it was not the sort of contemptuous surprise I had felt when my musical extravagances were accepted at Oxford. I knew that those were shams pure and simple. This book at least was written in English as good as I could manage, the plot was dramatic, and the people seemed to me not incredible. When the reviews came out, taking it seriously, I was not ashamed as when my tutor played in public those two tortuous preludes. What I had written during those

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wet weeks in France did at least make sense, if it had cost no effort.

This gave me to think. The novel had been so quickly performed that I had no recollection of how any of my effects were brought off. All the same, I knew that they had not been flukes; some kind of artistic conscience or consciousness had acted as censor, and might do so again. I set to work, very cautiously, on some short stories, testing my way in this new art as though I were walking among quicksands; but all the time—and this I realised by the time that second book was completed—my feet were on firm ground. That is not to say I enjoyed reading the stuff I wrote. I believe this to be the particular cross of writers, and one that is not laid upon the shoulders of other artists: that often they write in a manner and of events or people which would repel them in a book picked up by chance in a library. An artist paints, I suppose, the pictures he wants to paint; that is, supposing him free from economic pressure. But I have found surprisingly few writers who admit to enjoying their own kind of books, which looks as though we should dislike our subconscious selves very heartily if our souls were suddenly to turn bottom upwards.

This knowledge, that my subconscious self is waiting somewhere in the deeps or shallows of my soul to give me the lie, acts now as a check upon confession. I should like to say that since I have found something I can do, which brings in money and causes me to be noticed in the newspapers, I have become honest; that is, I no longer catch myself out in lies, because there is no longer any special reason for me to cheat myself and others, or to pose. But it may not be so; I will not be absolute about it. "What dreams may come," as Hamlet said, anticipating Freud, "must give us pause," and it may be only that I have become more wily, better able to deceive myself; proof that my mind is a sink of iniquity may be found, by those who

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understand such things, in the admission that I no longer have dreams.

I do, however, know two things for sure: it gives me pleasure to weigh, to use, and even to write words; and it has given me neither shame nor satisfaction to display here the expedients to which I was put fifteen years ago. Those terms at Oxford simply stand for a time of experiment, the necessary elbow-room that individuals need who grow up late. They were painful, but they left no trace, and I can speak of them as dispassionately as of the mumps which came my way during 1919. You must be a fool at some time of your life, just as before you die you must eat a peck of dirt. Now I believe that I am wiser; I know that I am happier. And not for all the tea in China would I be eighteen again.

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A Country Childhood

I

AT the close of a day too busy for friendship or reading, what a comfort it is to look upon my favourite shelf! These neglected but still uncritical friends wait with the constancy of true lovers in whom, sooner or later, consolation will be found. The books I have held dear seem to wait for me always, as Solveig waited for Peer Gynt.

They keep queer company among themselves, giving me the amusement I should have if all my friends and relations were to visit me on the same day. Here are the slight works of Katherine Mansfield, exquisitely feminine in their sensibility, a shade spiteful, rubbing covers on one side with the rollicking, masculine *Tom Jones*, and, on the other, with George Eliot's large commonsensical *Middlemarch*. There, *Cranford* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, to look on either of which is to smile with affection, touch the wrought melancholy of *The Shropshire Lad* and the bitter polish of *Madame Bovary*. Dr. Johnson, I suspect, for all his robust humanity, would have been ill at ease, in life, had he come so close as I have set him here to "*A Pure Woman, faithfully presented by Thomas Hardy*"; and what would he or Tess have thought

of poor Rousseau's *Confessions*? *Anna Karenina* is strange company for Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*; and Manon Lescaut looks with surprise at Turgenev's heroines. But all these, who, like the mother of *Nicholas Nickleby*, had so much to say, are mute now. They do not even complain, as do my living friends: "You haven't been near us for six months." Their merit is to be for ever the same, though my mood towards them changes. My bookshelf intimates are the "pleasinger"—as Dorothy Osborne would have said—for being such a motley crowd. More especially in this age of cramping nationalism is it good to recognise so many friends of such diverse race and to have voyaged over strange oceans in the company of Conrad's seafaring men. The remoteness from my own time, place, habit of thought, which I have found in some books, has been an additional charm. Who does not feel a stirring of the heart on reading the title *Treasure Island*, or *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*? Yet *Our Village* is as dear and cosy as a well-trimmed oil lamp.

It is the friendliness of things well known in my own childhood, no less than the agreeable melancholy with which I used to recite:

"I remember, I remember
The house where I was born—"

which gives to the latest addition to my bookshelf its place of honour.

Dew on the Grass promises more refreshment than *Vile Bodies*, *Dusty Answer*, or *Cry Havoc*. Books with such titles as these may be welcomed to my house; they will find no place beside my bed. But Miss Eiluned Lewis's record of a childhood spent in my own eternally green Welsh country is as cool and sparkling as its title. To follow the little

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Lucy of this story along the banks of "the young Severn" is to find again the child I lost long ago where the Wye and the Irfon mingle in a still dreaming pool.

But there is this to be said against books whose magic conjures up dear personal ghosts. They take me long to read, so often do they slip on to my lap, while I laugh quietly to myself; or sigh.

II

The house of my own recollection is an eighteenth-century house of grey stone. It has a gracefully curved staircase of dark polished oak. The side of the stairs, next to the hand-rail—down which it is forbidden and delightful to slide—is perilously narrow. I am always in headlong haste—except when bidden to "hurry up" in buttoning my boots or eating the congealed porridge in my bowl on a winter's morning. I fall down, therefore, with great frequency, and am covered with bruises. At bath-time I am exceedingly proud of these blue and purple marks. I show them to the attendant of the day and boast to her that the hurts did not make me cry out. This is the truth—more often than not. I bruise with exceptional ease and am thus able to maintain a reputation for courage. The bruises have an entrancing way of turning yellow before they fade, like sullen sunsets. I love also to parade the scar on my left thumb where I cut it to the bone with a wood-chopper one day in my Red Indian period, when *Two Little Savages* was my favourite reading. In the nursery, below the coloured print of Little Miss Muffet and the sepia one of a small girl and a large St. Bernard dog, entitled "*I'se Biggest*," there is a cupboard containing Indian Brave paraphernalia of my own making. I am very shy of displaying these secret works of art. Whenever Mother insists on showing them to visiting grown-ups,

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I squirm and pull up my long black woollen stockings in the ill-bred manner for which I am reprimanded.

“How ingenious!” they exclaim, and they laugh. I burn with shame. My treasures, which adult praise and patronage have ruined, consist of a necklace of crabs’ claws, a relic of last summer’s visit to the sea; a head-dress of feathers such as bestrew our wash-house after one of those farmyard slaughterings that make me wince; a pipe, whittled out of the branch of a tree—the labour of my beloved penknife, so often taken from me because “that child’s so careless, no better than a boy”; robes and a tent of potato sacks stitched together and decorated with buffaloes and prancing mustangs. My drawing is modernistic in its disregard for realism. My paint-box is in a perpetual chaos of colours, mixed in daring experiment. It has been the despair of Miss Flint, who has tried, in vain, to teach me to stipple clean little landscapes like her own; and of Fräulein Hänner, who has met with equal failure when showing me how to compose flower pieces painted upon paper fans and oilcloth splash backs. Fräulein has also endeavoured to interest me in the crocheting of hair tidies and other useful adjuncts to the front spare room. At Christmas, under her direction, I have manufactured hundreds of coloured paper roses with which to decorate the house. But I am obstinately hostile to the making of anything which I have not invented for myself.

I like Fräulein, however, better than the English governesses who have left under Mother’s displeasure. Fräulein often falls asleep in the middle of teaching me the intricacies of her language. She is not cross; only infinitely old and sad, like the nurse in a fairy tale, who knows that doom is impending. Presently, I think, I shall prick my finger with a spindle—but, alas! I haven’t such a thing—and fall asleep for a hundred years. She, too, will sleep on then, at peace,

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and the white hairs upon her chin will grow into a veritable beard; while the sombre laurels outside our house, where I often hide, will turn into an impenetrable thicket; and the spiders will spin webs—I am terrified of spiders. I shudder; and Fräulein wakes up with a start to exclaim, “Ach Gott! De luncheon bell already! And we ’ave not ’ad our morning walk.” I am grateful to her. For I detest those prim constitutionals, the tight dogskin gloves chilling my hands, the elastic of my hat biting me under the chin.

Fräulein is the first grown-up for whom I feel pity. She has lived in the Gothic castles of great nobles—wicked Barons, I believe—but to her they all seemed good. It is very sad for her now to be with people as insignificant as ourselves, as cold-hearted as all the British. She tells marvellous tales of Christmas festivities, gigantic Yule logs, bedizened trees, tall as church steeples, glittering in vast candle-lit halls; and of banquets as stupendous as those described by Harrison Ainsworth. When she shakes her grey head and has tears in her eyes, I weep in sympathy for the lost glories of the Fatherland. “*Tempora mutantur*,” she says as the tears fall, “*nos et mutamur in illis*.” She is no more a Latinist than I, but the tag, like a charm, consoles her.

I have visited her country, but only in summer-time. I can remember its entrancing toy shops and its delicious foods with strange names, and steaming down a great river in a ship full of English people, with red books in their hands, who kept on exclaiming “Look!” There were no lessons in Germany, and no rice puddings. I liked it exceedingly. But I do not care for its children. The little girls, Fräulein says, curtsy to their elders. They are all docile and industrious. Nor do they climb trees and tear the clothes their “Liebe Mammias” have given them. Their hair is not a red tangle like mine, impatient of the comb, but smooth

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and blonde and worn in two neat plaits. I like it far better when she tells me about snow, waist-deep, and bears and heroes in green hats who go out to shoot them. I am quite at home with dark forests and wild beasts, thanks to Andrew Lang's row of various coloured fairy books. Sometimes I lie prone on the hearthrug, my feet curled tight round each other, and read about princes and princesses. More often, in winter, when Fräulein drops asleep over the fire, her maroon skirt, with its many lines of black braid, turned up over her serge petticoat, I tip-toe to the window and am entranced by the fern-leaf patterns the frost has fashioned there. I cannot think how it is that Jack Frost, lacking pencil and rubber, can draw so very much better than myself. Some day I am going to be a famous painter, and make stained-glass windows like the new one over our family pew in church. Meanwhile, perhaps, if I creep down to the kitchen and ask Cook, very prettily, she will give me cream and raspberry jam in a pie-dish to set on the sill to freeze. For all my tomboyish ways when alone, I am already aware that a nice little girl's smile and "if you please" will go a long way towards getting her what she wants in life.

III

But I have strayed, before starting it, from the second chapter of Miss Lewis's story. It is called "Hide and Seek," and begins with the words: "The Rectory children had come to tea and now all of them had run out into the garden and were deciding what game they should play next. Released at length from the spell of Louisa's eye and the cool, leaf-shaded nursery——"

"The cool, leaf-shaded nursery!"

The book has dropped on to my lap, and I am seeing the apple tree in the kitchen garden which in summer threw

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a dapple of pale green shadow across my own nursery walls. The orchard is full of ancient pear and apple trees, looking tamed, decent and dressed in their petticoats of whitewash. But the dark old spruce and the gaunt Scotch firs round the front of our house are savage and morose. They sigh and drip all winter long, and groan and toss to and fro most terribly during the spring and autumn gales. Sometimes one of them crashes to earth, and I feel that a mighty monster has fallen in battle. There is a fascination in climbing along its carcase—yesterday so high above my reach—before the men come to lop off its resinous limbs and haul its trunk away. All trees are vivid personalities to me, excepting the stiff Wellingtonias by which our drive is bordered. They alone are unmoved by storms, unchanged by the seasons which make of their deciduous brethren such lovely and varied companions. The Noah's Ark, with which I am allowed to play on Sundays, when more amusing playthings are locked away, has an accompaniment of miniature Wellingtonias on little round stands. I am not very fond of toys; and my eleven dolls are used only to represent the melodramatic characters of my children in the game of Mrs. Black and Mrs. White. I play this with my sister. She, being older by some years than myself, and of endless patience, takes the rôle of Mrs. White, whose children "never give her a moment's anxiety," whereas mine have every known vice. In confiding to Mrs. White my many and spectacular troubles, I do all the talking and command all the attention. When Mother calls my sister away, I push the twenty-two offspring of the matrons Black and White pell-mell into their drawer. Dolls are to me no more than puppets, and an audience is necessary when I turn dramatist. If I cannot show the shocked Mrs. White how Maria Teresa *will* stain her fingers by plunging them into the nursery ink-pot, causing my

sister, in her own character, to utter cries of protest and warning—what fun shall I get out of the simpering lifeless thing? I resent having had to say “thank you” for Maria Teresa last Christmas. I had been praying to Gentle Jesus every night since November—“make me a *truly* good girl, and please put it into the hearts of my parents to give me a jet-black stallion.” In prayer, a stallion sounds grander than an ordinary pony.

When there is no one to listen to my inventions, which is often the case, since my sister is “Mother’s little right hand,” there are plenty of more exciting things to do than to play with silly dolls. There is, for instance, the closet in my sister’s bedroom to explore. It is built into the wall and is so dark that it can become a dungeon, a smuggler’s cave, the hiding-place of Bonnie Prince Charlie, or of our own last Llewelyn. It may become the cellar in which the Forty Thieves were hidden in their jars. The trunks with arched lids covered in shiny black oilcloth make fine stage properties—chests full of loot, rocks wet with seaweed, whatever I will. Though locked, they are themselves of interest. For one of them contains Mother’s wedding dress of stiff white satin with a monstrous big bustle. I have decided that when I grow up I shall wear crinolines. If I must be hampered by a skirt, why not ruffle it in the largest possible variety? And, since learning to behave “like a little lady” is such tedious hard work, may I not as well be “a fine lady,” “a very great lady,” “a noble lady,” like those in history? Not that I care a rap for such mundane ambitions whenever I am out of doors, with the west wind blowing the soft rain into my upturned face. To walk in the valley of the Irfon is to be wet but blessed.

The attic is a place of greater enchantment than the dark closet, or even than Mother’s store-room, with its rows of

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mysterious canisters, its tins incredibly inscribed "Bombay Duck." If the lid of that one were ever raised, would live birds come flapping out, as in the rhyme—"When the pie was opened the birds began to sing"?

In the attic there is a chest of curious shape covered in hairy hide and studded with antique nails. There is said to be there also the embalmed hand of a Black Man, but I have never been allowed to see this. Mother calls it "a gruesome trophy." I haunt the attic in hope of a blood-curdling sight. These treasures were brought back from the East by Dear Uncle. His portrait in uniform and side whiskers hangs in the hall, surrounded by swords which he wore, and many other ferocious weapons, presumably surrendered to him by conquered "Natives." The dining-room walls are dark with sacred pictures looted from some church in the Crimea. Mother is ill at ease about possessing them, and, later, clears her conscience—when she redecorates the dining-room—by presenting the sacrilegious plunder to our Vicar. He must be embarrassed by such a gift. For the Vicarage is more than fully furnished with bright water-colour sketches and family photographs; and his parishioners are far too Low to permit the hanging of pictures in their church.

Dear Uncle is so called because, unlike Uncle Evan and Uncle Hugh, and the rest of my great-uncles, he has left my father property. When he retired in the 'sixties, he added plate-glass bow windows to our house and stuck castellated battlements upon the roof, and made other grandiose improvements in the taste of his own age. He died long before I was born; but I carry on conversations with his romantic ghost. He haunts the house. There is a corner cupboard with glass doors behind which are locked away his dolls—little clay figures of men in exotic dress. One wears only a

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loin-cloth, and is salaaming humbly. The proud Rajah in red and gold has a mighty turban. The tailor sits naked and cross-legged at his trade. I think Dear Uncle must have been a very nice grown-up to play with dolls so much more attractive than my own. Lumber rooms and cupboards full of curios are my delight. To this day I cannot pass an antique dealer's without a longing to steal in unobserved and play alone in the dusty twilight.

IV

But I am straying away again from the hide and seek described in Miss Lewis's book. I pick it up once more. Instantly another memory of my own intervenes between her page and my eyes.

Time has gone by. It is my birthday, and I am feeling very old, and rather jaded by the responsibilities of a hostess. The weather has made us anxious for days past. But when The Day comes, it is surprisingly sunny. The tea-table has been set out under the green canopy of the walnut tree, the imposing cake in its centre, covered with pink and white sugar. My request for a trimming of sugar mice has been granted, for my own beloved white mice have eaten their young again, and been taken from me to the Jumble Sale on account of their bad example. I have lighted the candles with due ceremony before my assembled guests, and have cut the cake and handed it round trembling—unable myself to eat a morsel. Now I am politely showing the others my latest invention: the manufacture of tiny purses from the sheaths which cover the sprouts of our rhubarb. I have confided to them my secret name of "Silcwm" for this vegetable substance. They do not appear to find the dried and shrivelled results as fascinating as I have found the flaying, with a sharp slate, of the juicy buds. I am dis-

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appointed, and relapse into silence as Barbara tells us loftily how she goes out riding every day with a groom. The four black-eyed little girls from a neighbouring parsonage, against whose pronounced Welsh accent Mother has warned me, are providing Barbara with an open-mouthed audience. One of them slips her thin arm round my waist and whispers that she wants me for her "very special dearest friend." But my heart is cold. I am bored with my party of strangers, all of whom, except Barbara, are shy in one another's unaccustomed presence. She is different. Her father does not have to earn the family living. He will entertain the King should His Majesty ever do anything so improbable as to visit our county.

"Radn'sheer, poor Radn'sheer,
Never a park and never a deer.
Never a squire of five hundred a year."

My father, too, is remarkable. If the hangman fails, he will be obliged with his own hands to hang anyone condemned to death in Radnorshire. That knowledge gives a horrid expectancy to the County Assizes. I have been told that the last person hanged among us was a girl of sixteen. She was condemned for murdering her baby. I wonder why she did it. It seems such an odd thing to do. "All Mothers love their children." But that was a hundred years ago; and everyone has been good in Radnorshire ever since. Presently I slip away unobserved, and run to see if Dio is happy.

Dio has been shut up in the sewing-room because he becomes hysterical when we play French and English, and bites the calves of our legs just where our white party socks leave off. There have been other dogs of character in my life already, such as the retriever given to my father by a grateful client and subsequently discovered to be a confirmed

sheep-killer. But Dio is my very own. I love him better than anyone on earth. He was brought home to me, very long ago—it must be nearly a year now—in Mother's muff. At that time he was as small and round as a hedgehog, and had deplorable manners. Housemaids reviled him. He is still very bad—he chases the hens—and is at constant odds with our cross old groom-gardener. Like myself, Dio has a forelock which tumbles over his eyes. They are as bright as pebbles under the flashing water of the many streams I meet during my walks. I hope always that these stones may prove to be real jewels. Dio is frantic with joy at sight of me. He bounces with dirty paws all over my white frock. He licks my face. His tongue is long and pink and wet. I crouch on the floor telling him to be a good dog, knowing that he will never obey, and loving him the more because of his naughtiness. Our savage quarrels are forgotten—how he rushes under the nursery sofa snarling and showing his fangs, while I mercilessly drag him forth by the tail, and Mademoiselle screams at the top of her voice, “*Oh, Mon Dieu ! Prends garde ! Quelle enfant ! Quel diable d'un chien !*”

Mademoiselle is a fool bred among nothing better than shops. She cannot tell a rook from a raven, nor a rabbit from a hare. But I hope she will stay long. For, unlike an English governess, she does not have to be obeyed. She mistakes the bullocks, staring dully in every field, for ferocious bulls, intent upon goring us to death. She is afraid, in her high-heeled shoes, to cross the swing bridges that span our neighbouring rivers. It is fun to lure her half-way across the swinging planks, and then to jump up and down until she shrieks and the wire ropes creak and I myself am pleasantly frightened. I am not afraid of the scolding I receive when she has regained firm ground and her habitual volubility.

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She is good-natured and soon forgets. When we "help" in the hay-field, she leaves off her corsets and disgusts Mother by becoming curved all over. I do not like being made to talk French, which is a silly language, neither so stately as German nor so dramatic as the Welsh in which our maids conduct their private quarrels. But I take a furtive delight in Mademoiselle's "bawdy" song. I know that is the right word for it, because I have asked "What does *bawdy* mean?" and have been told severely "*not nice*. . . . What on earth are you reading now, child? Oh! Shakespeare! That's much too difficult for you to understand. Go and get one of Mrs. Molesworth's nice stories." Mademoiselle's song is emphatically *not nice*. It is about a naughty child and the chorus expresses this wicked sentiment:

" Il est néc—ess—*air—re*
De tromper sa Ma—*man*."

The word bawdy is evidently akin to the name for lady dog, which men only are permitted to use. The employment of unfamiliar words has involved me in many humiliations. When I told Godfather Fred that my pony "caracoled," he laughed in my face. When I spoke of history as being "bloody," he looked shocked. And it is useless to ask grown-ups to explain anything. I desire to know, for instance, how our cat's new kittens will arrive. I always follow Purretta about eagerly when Cook has told me that there will soon be another litter. But Purretta eludes me; and I end by finding the kittens already there in her basket being licked and purred over.

All baby creatures seem to me miraculous and heaven-sent. I believe in the explanation, "they are given to their mothers by God." But I do so long to see God bringing His gift. The mother has to be waiting, it seems, in her basket, or her stall, or, if she be human, in a proper bed. Perhaps God

drops the kittens down the chimney, supposed to be Father Christmas's entrance. Of his existence, however, I am already sceptical. But of the mysterious appearance of babies there can be no doubt. In the cow-shed there is no chimney; and even if there were, how could He drop down it anything so large as a calf? He must have opened the padlocked door, somehow or other, while we were all asleep, and have entered, tenderly bearing the new red-and-white heifer in His arms. The Good Shepherd in the picture with a lamb on His shoulder is perhaps attending a birth? But somehow I fancy that it is God the Father, and neither God the Son nor God the Holy Ghost, who brings the newly born. I have heard the maids whispering that when Mrs. Price the Post's twins were born, she could be heard "groaning something dreadful, poor thing, right down the street." In my Sunday painting book there is an illustration of Moses, exhausted with praying for his people. I know the story: how, if he ceases to hold up his arms in supplication, God will not grant him what he wants. I suppose it must be the same in this mystery of birth. If the waiting mothers cease to raise their hands to heaven, God will never bring them their babies. That must be why mothers are said to groan, and to be so very tired that they have to lie abed afterwards. I wonder do they see God's face when He enters with the newly born? I once summoned courage to ask this question of Godmother Josephine, who is a rare grown-up. She stooped to kiss me suddenly, and answered, "I think perhaps *you* will—bless you!—if you are ever a mother."

V

I am recalled from this reverie by Mademoiselle, who bursts in upon Dio and myself, upbraiding me in a torrent of French for uncivilly neglecting my guests.

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When they have at last driven away, Barbara with her stately Mamma in a carriage and pair, the others in their pony-carts, my new frock is discovered to be torn. I am in disgrace on this account and because someone else has broken Mademoiselle's frilled parasol. She is helping the parlour-maid to "tidy up," and I escape being put to bed at the usual, much too early, hour. I creep out of sight on to the upper lawn surrounded by dark ancient fir trees, whose long shadows lie motionless across the deep green turf. Thrushes and blackbirds are singing their evening song. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," I whisper aloud to myself. My eyes fill with tears—I have no notion why, save that they habitually do so whenever I am allowed to stay up late to go to church on Sunday evening instead of to the dull Morning Service. The drowsy scent of stocks hangs on the still and golden air. I sit down upon the grass, damp now with falling dew after the hot day. I caress the smooth turf, liking well its cool moisture, and I reflect that soon there will come the thrill of discovering mushrooms in the wet fields; and, after mushrooms, blackberries in the tawny hedgerows; and then nuts. It is wrong to sit here shivering in a thin dress. But I will not go indoors until I am called—more than once. If Mademoiselle forgets me, as she did when Mother was ill, I shall see the pale stars appear in a sky turned duck's-egg green, and the silent bats begin to flit. Perhaps I shall behold the solemn owl that hoots so mournfully outside my window at night. I am in a mood of hushed expectancy, fearful to move lest I break a spell. Besides, my legs ache with those eternal growing pains.

I look up, and there above me towers the hill I love best of all the many dear green hills about my home. It curves like a huge wave for ever about to break. So majestic does it appear this evening, against the pallor of the calm sky,

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that a profound emotion of reverence transports me. I scramble to my knees and clasp my hands tightly together. "Bless me, even me also, O my Father," I pray. I long with an inexpressible yearning to be made beautiful and serene, to enter into a like repose, remote, everlasting, beyond praise or blame.

My face is wet with joyful tears when Mademoiselle discovers me. "And now you are tired," she scolds. "And to-morrow you will be cross. I shall give you a dose. Yes?"

"But I'm terribly terribly happy," I declare, sobbing, because it is useless trying to explain.

VI

Long ago and far away! I turn again now to *Dew on the Grass*, blessing it for having made me remember another such childhood in Wales. As I glance through the pages, many dewy scenes come before my city-wearied eyes. I hear the mowing-machine clatter past, drawn by patient horses. I smell the scent of new-mown hay. The pleasant name "Sweet Vernal" comes to my lips. I listen to the bells of little churches calling to prayer on idle summer evenings, and to the song of rushing rivers, and the long-drawn lonely cry of the curlew upon the open hill-tops. I have climbed alone there with the first of dogs. The thickets full of song birds are left behind, and the larch plantations above them—the zone of wood-pigeons and red squirrels. Far below me lie the small pale green fields. The darker hedges dividing them look, from this great height, like the feather-stitching upon a patchwork quilt. The whitewashed farm-houses have dwindled to the size of toys. Men are become ants. Heaven stretches above me and around, vast, welcoming, within my reach, as I believed

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then, like the hand of God. Dio puts up a rabbit and dashes off in yelping pursuit. I am thrilled by the hunt, but fervently hope that the quarry will escape, for all things living are dear to me and the world is too beautiful a fairyland to witness death.

VII

I am grateful to the author of *Dew on the Grass* for having thus brought me home. I shall have no need to-night to take down any poet from my bedside shelf. Before I close her book and fall asleep, I shall read again her verses in which I also have her country pride :

We who were born
In country places,
Far from cities
And shifting faces,
We have a birthright
No man can sell,
And a secret joy
No man can tell.

For we are kindred
To lordly things :
The wild duck's flight
And the white owl's wings,
To pike and salmon,
To bull and horse,
The curlew's cry
And the smell of gorse.

Pride of trees,
Swiftmess of streams,
Magic of frost
Have shaped our dreams.
No baser vision
Their spirit fills
Who walk by right
On the naked hills.

FRANK O'CONNOR

Peasants

WHEN Michael John Cronin stole the club funds everyone said "Devil's cure to him!" " 'Tis the price of him!" "Kind father for him!" and all the other things that people do say on such occasions. Seed, breed and generation, the Cronin family was criticised, and for twenty miles around and a hundred years back there was no member of it whose deeds and words were not examined by the light of the fresh misfortune. And a bad story they made. Michael John's father had been a drunkard, and his father before him a land-grabber. Then there was an uncle or grand-uncle who had been a policeman and taken a hand in the bloody work at Mitchelstown long ago, and a cousin of the same who was not all she might have been. It was a great shaking up the Cronins got altogether, and if you had a grudge in for one of them at all, even if he was no more than a thirty-third cousin, you could have had fine sport, dropping a friendly word of sorrow about it, or sympathising with the poor old mother till you had the blood lighting in his eyes.

There was but one thing for them to do: that was to send him to America, where he would be no further shame to them, and that is what they would have done but for what blew up immediately after. The parish priest, Father Crowley, was looked upon as a strange and obstinate man. Though he had been in the parish for many years, he had never got on well

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with his parishioners; he was forever telling them they were untruthful, double-faced and fond of flattery. Now, Father Crowley was chairman of the club committee, as he was of every committee that ever was started there, and he staggered the members by proposing in all seriousness that Michael John Cronin should be handed over to the police. Well, up to that moment no committee member had ever dared to contradict him or said "yes," "ay" or "no" to him in a bad spirit, but the like of this had never been heard of in the parish before. To put the police on a poor boy, and he in trouble! One by one the committee-men stood up, very embarrassed and sheepish, and told him as much.

"But he did wrong," said the priest in his slow, deep voice. "He did wrong, and he must be punished."

"Maybe so, Father," replied Con Norton, who acted as spokesman. "Maybe so, indeed; but is that any reason why his poor mother should be punished as well, and she a widow-woman?"

"True for you!" chorussed the others.

"It serves his mother right," said the priest shortly. "Why didn't she beat Christian principles into him when she had him on her knee?"

"Maybe so too," agreed Norton; "but is that any reason why his uncle Peter should be punished?"

"Or his uncle Dan?" asked another.

"Or his uncle James?" asked a third.

"Or his cousins the Dwyers that keep the little shop in Lissnacarriga, as decent a living family as there is in the county Cork?" asked a fourth.

"What the dickens has it to do with them?" asked Father Crowley, growing angry. "What punishment is it to them? Will you tell me that? You'll be telling me next 'tis a punishment to me, and I a child of Adam like himself!"

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"And do you mean, Father," asked Norton, "that 'tis no punishment to them, having one of their own blood made a public show? Maybe 'tis a thing you'd like done to yourself?"

"There was no one of my family ever a thief," replied Father Crowley sternly.

"We don't know whether there was or not," put in another man, becoming saucy.

"Easy, now! Easy, Phil!" said Norton.

"What do you mean?" asked Father Crowley, rising and grabbing his hat.

"What he means, Father," replied Norton, "is that we know nothing at all about your family. The Crowleys may be a grand stock in their own country, but that's fifteen long miles away, and this isn't their country, and the Cronins are neighbours of ours since the dawn of history and time, and it would be a very queer thing if at this hour of the day we handed one of them over to the police. . . . And now, listen to me, Father," he went on, heated at the fire of his own eloquence. "If a cow of mine got sick in the morning 't isn't a Crowley or a Cremin I'd be asking in to help me, and damn the bit of use it would be to me if I did. And all knows I'm no enemy of the priests, but a respectable farmer who pays his dues and goes to his duties regular."

"True for you! True for you!" agreed the committee.

"I don't give a button what you are!" said the priest. "And now, listen to me, Con Norton. I bear that man Cronin no grudge, nor his family either, which is more than some of you here can say, but I know my duty, and I'll do it in spite of the whole lot of you."

"Well, you'll find no one in this parish to support you, Father," said Norton.

Two days later Norton and his friends went about the

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village collecting. And on the same evening, bringing with them Michael John Cronin, who was a living picture of repentance, they made their way into the priest's sitting-room and placed on the table the eighteen pounds, four shillings and twopence which had been missing.

"What is that?" asked the priest, removing his spectacles and rubbing his eyes wearily.

"'Tis the money, Father. 'Tis all paid back now, and you've no cause to be cross with Michael John any more. And any little bitterness there may have been between us, we'll say no more about it."

"Con Norton," said the priest, "you'd better keep your soft words for the judge. He may pay more attention to them than I do."

"The judge, Father?"

"Ay, Con, the judge."

For close on a minute there was no word spoken. The committee-men stood there with open mouths in consternation.

"And is that what you done on us, Father?" asked Norton at last, his voice shaking. "Is it yourself is going to show us up before every parish in the country as a lot of robbers."

"You foolish creatures, I'm showing up none of you."

"You are then, Father, and every man in the parish," said Norton savagely. "And mark me, there'll be bad blood on the head of it."

On the following Sunday Father Crowley spoke of the matter from the altar. He spoke for a full half-hour. His sermon was one long denunciation of the "long-tailed families" that he said were the ruination of the country and made a mockery of truth and justice and charity. He was, as his congregation agreed, a terrible obstinate old man that never knew when he was in the wrong. After Mass he was visited in his sacristy by the committee. He gave Norton a

terrible look under his brows which made that respectable farmer flinch.

"Father," he said at last, "we only want one word with you. One word and we'll be going. You're a hard man, and you said some bitter things to us this morning. But we're quiet, peaceable, poor men, and we won't cross you any more. We came to make a good bargain with you."

"Well? What is it?"

"We'll say no more about it if you'll do one little thing to oblige us."

"The bargain!" said the priest impatiently. "What's the bargain?"

"We'll let the matter drop for good and all if you'll give the boy a character."

"Yes, Father," cried the whole committee in chorus. "Give him a character! Give him a character!"

"Give him a what?"

"Give him a character, Father, for the love of God. If you speak up well for him, the judge will leave him off. And then there'll be no stain on the parish."

"Is it out of your minds you are, you half-witted *aindeiseoirs*?" said the priest, his face suffused with blood, his head trembling. "Here am I all these long years preaching to ye about duty and public spirit and justice and truth, and ye no more understand me than that wall there! Is it the way you want me to perjure myself? Answer me, every one of ye, is it?"

"Ah, what perjure!" said Norton. "Sure, can't you say a few words for the boy? There's no one asking you to say much. What harm will it do you to tell the judge he's an honest, good-living, upright lad, and that he took the money without meaning anyone harm?"

"My God!" muttered the priest, running his hands dis-

tractedly through his white hair. "There's no talking to ye, no talking to ye, ye lot of sheep."

When he was gone they turned and looked at one another.

"He's a trial," said one.

"He's a tyrant," said another vindictively.

"He is indeed," agreed Norton, scratching his head.

"Still, in God's name we'll give him one more chance."

That evening while Father Crowley was in the middle of his tea the committee-men called again. They looked very spruce and business-like and independent. The priest glared at them.

"Are ye back?" he asked bitterly. "Somehow I was thinking ye would be, and I declare to goodness I'm sick of you and your old committee, and I'm sorry to the Lord I ever joined it or had anything to do with it. Because, let me tell you, it has my peace of mind destroyed."

"Oh, we're not the committee, Father," said Norton stiffly.

"Oh, aren't ye?"

"No, we are not."

"Well, all I have to say is, ye look mighty like it. And if I'm not being impertinent, who the deuce are ye?"

"We're a deputation."

"Oh! A deputation! Fancy that, now! And a deputation from what?"

"A deputation from the parish. . . . So now, maybe you'll listen to us?"

"Oh, go on! I'm listening, I'm listening."

"'Tis about that little business this morning," said Con Norton, suddenly dismounting from his high horse and adopting a friendly and confidential tone. "Now, Father, maybe you didn't understand us, and we didn't understand you. But we're quiet, simple, poor men that want to do the best we can by everybody, and a few words or a few pounds wouldn't stand in our way. Do you follow me?"

"I declare," said Father Crowley, "I don't know whether I do or not."

"Well, 'tis like this. We don't want any blame to be put on the parish and on the Cronins, and you're the one man that can save us from it. Now, all we ask of you is to give the boy a character——"

"Yes, Father," interrupted the others in chorus, "give him a character, give him a character!"

"Give him a character, and you'll never be troubled with him again. The day he walks out of the court a free man, you can hand him his ticket to America, and tell him never again show his face in Carricknabreena. There's the price of it, Father," added Norton, clapping a bundle of notes on the table. "Put the money in your pocket, and we've his mother's word and his own word that he'll go there when you bid him."

"He can go to pot!" retorted Father Crowley. "What's it to me where he goes?"

"Now, now, Father! Just a minute! Just a minute! Sure, we know well 'tis no advantage to you or to the parish to have him go to America, and that's the very thing we came to talk to you about. Now, supposing—just supposing—for the sake of argument, that you did what we're after suggesting, there are a few of us here, and between us we might be able to raise whatever little contribution to the building fund you'd think would be reasonable to cover the expense and trouble to yourself. Do you follow me now?"

"Con Norton," said the priest, rising, "I follow you. And now will you get out, yourself and your friends? This morning it was perjury, and now it's bribery, and the Lord knows what it will be next. I see I've been wasting my breath. Now will you get out or will I kick you out?"

And, true to his word and his character, not one word did

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Father Crowley say in Michael John's favour the day of the trial, no more than if he was a heathen. Three months Michael John got, and by all accounts he got off lightly.

When he came out of gaol he was a changed man. Down-cast he was, and dark in himself. There was no one but was sorry for him; people who had never spoken to him before spoke to him then, and to all he said, "I'm very grateful to you, friend, for overlooking my misfortune." He refused to go to America, so Norton and the committee made another whip round, and between this and the money they had collected previously, and what the Cronins had made up to send him to America they gave him enough to open a small shop. Then they found him a job on the County Council and an agency for some shipping company, until at last he was able to start a public-house.

As for Father Crowley, until he was shifted, twelve months later, he never did a day's good in the parish. The dues went down, and the presents went down, and people who had money to spend on Masses took it anywhere rather than leave it to him. They said after it broke his heart.

Dead though he is, he has left no pleasant memory in the parish. Only for him, say the people, Michael John Cronin would be in America to-day. Only for him he would never have married a girl with a fortune, nor had it to lend to poor people in the hard times, nor ever sucked the blood of Christians. For, as an old man recently said to me about him, "A robber he is and was, and a grabber like his grandfather before him, and an enemy of the people like his uncle, the policeman; and though some say he'll dip his hand yet where he dipped it before, for myself I have no hope unless the mercy of God sends us another Moses or Brian Boru to cast him down and hammer him into the dust."

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The Murder

THIS happened a number of years ago in Monterey County, in central California. The Cañon del Castillo is one of those valleys in the Santa Lucia range which lie between its many spurs and ridges. From the main Cañon del Castillo a number of little arroyos cut back into the mountains, oak-wooded canyons, heavily brushed with poison oak and sage. At the head of the canyon there stands a tremendous stone castle, buttressed and towered like those strongholds the Crusaders put up in the path of their conquests. Only a close visit to the castle shows it to be a strange accident of time and water and erosion working on soft, stratified sandstone. In the distance the ruined battlements, the gates, the towers, even the arrow slits require little imagination to make out.

Below the castle, on the nearly level floor of the canyon, stand an old ranch house, a weathered and mossy barn and a warped feeding-shed for cattle. The house is deserted; the doors, swinging on rusted hinges, squeal and bang on nights when the wind courses down from the castle. Not many people visit the house. Sometimes a crowd of boys tramp through the rooms, peering into empty closets and loudly defying the ghosts they deny.

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Jim Moore, who owns the land, does not like to have people about the house. He rides up from his new house, farther down the valley, and chases the boys away. He has put "No Trespassing" signs on his fences to keep curious and morbid people out. Sometimes he thinks of burning the old house down, but then a strange and powerful relation with the swinging doors, the blind and desolate windows forbids the destruction. If he should burn the house he would destroy a great and important piece of his life. He knows that when he goes to town with his plump and still pretty wife, people turn and look at his retreating back with awe and some admiration.

Jim Moore was born in the old house and grew up in it. He knew every grained and weathered board of the barn, every smooth, worn manger-rack. His mother and father were both dead when he was thirty. He celebrated his majority by raising a beard. He sold the pigs and decided never to have any more. At last he bought a fine Guernsey bull to improve his stock, and he began to go to Monterey on Saturday nights, to get drunk and to talk with the noisy girls of the "Three Star."

Within a year Jim Moore married Jelka Šepič, a Jugo-Slav girl, daughter of a heavy and patient farmer of Pine Canyon. Jim was not proud of her foreign family, of her many brothers and sisters and cousins, but he delighted in her beauty. Jelka had eyes as large and questioning as a doe's eyes. Her nose was thin and sharply faceted, and her lips were deep and soft. Jelka's skin always startled Jim, for between night and night he forgot how beautiful it was. She was so smooth and quiet and gentle, such a good house-keeper, that Jim often thought with disgust of her father's advice on the wedding day. The old man, bleary and bloated

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with festival beer, elbowed Jim in the ribs and grinned suggestively, so that his little dark eyes almost disappeared behind puffed and wrinkled lids.

"Don't be big fool, now," he said. "Jelka is Slav girl. He's not like American girl. If he is bad, beat him. If he's good too long, beat him too. I beat his mama. Papa beat my mama. Slav girl! He's not like a man that don't beat hell out of him."

"I wouldn't beat Jelka," Jim said.

The father giggled and nudged him again with his elbow, "Don't be big fool," he warned. "Some time you see." He rolled back to the beer barrel.

Jim found soon enough that Jelka was not like American girls. She was very quiet. She never spoke first, but only answered his questions, and then with soft short replies. She learned her husband as she learned passages of Scripture. After they had been married a while, Jim never wanted for any habitual thing in the house but Jelka had it ready for him before he could ask. She was a fine wife, but there was no companionship in her. She never talked. Her great eyes followed him, and when he smiled, sometimes she smiled too, a distant and covered smile. Her knitting and mending and sewing were interminable. There she sat, watching her wise hands, and she seemed to regard with wonder and pride the little white hands that could do such nice and useful things. She was so much like an animal that sometimes Jim patted her head and neck under the same impulse that made him stroke a horse.

In the house Jelka was remarkable. No matter what time Jim came in from the hot dry range or from the bottom farm land, his dinner was exactly, steamingly ready for him. She watched while he ate, and pushed the dishes close when he needed them, and filled his cup when it was empty.

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Early in the marriage he told her things that happened on the farm, but she smiled at him as a foreigner does who wishes to be agreeable even though he doesn't understand.

"The stallion cut himself on the barbed wire," he said.

And she replied, "Yes," with a downward inflection that held neither question nor interest.

He realised before long that he could not get in touch with her in any way. If she had a life apart, it was so remote as to be beyond his reach. The barrier in her eyes was not one that could be removed, for it was neither hostile nor intentional.

At night he stroked her straight black hair and her unbelievably smooth golden shoulders, and she whimpered a little with pleasure. Only in the climax of his embrace did she seem to have a life apart and fierce and passionate. And then immediately she lapsed into the alert and painfully dutiful wife.

"Why don't you ever talk to me?" he demanded. "Don't you want to talk to me?"

"Yes," she said. "What do you want me to say?" She spoke the language of his race out of a mind that was foreign to his race.

When a year had passed, Jim began to crave the company of women, the chattering exchange of small talk, the shrill pleasant insults, the shame-sharpened vulgarity. He began to go again to town, to drink and to play with the noisy girls of the "Three Star." They liked him there for his firm, controlled face and for his readiness to laugh.

"Where's your wife?" they demanded.

"Home in the barn," he responded. It was a never-failing joke.

Saturday afternoons he saddled a horse and put a rifle in

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the scabbard in case he should see a deer. Always he asked, "You don't mind staying alone?"

"No. I don't mind."

And once he asked, "Suppose someone should come?"

Her eyes sharpened for a moment, and then she smiled. "I would send them away," she said.

"I'll be back about noon to-morrow. It's too far to ride in the night." He felt that she knew where he was going, but she never protested nor gave any sign of disapproval. "You should have a baby," he said.

Her face lighted up. "Some time God will be good," she said eagerly.

He was sorry for her loneliness. If only she visited with the other women of the canyon she would be less lonely, but she had no gift for visiting. Once every month or so she put horses to the buckboard and went to spend an afternoon with her mother, and with the brood of brothers and sisters and cousins who lived in her father's house.

"A fine time you'll have," Jim said to her. "You'll gabble your crazy language like ducks for a whole afternoon. You'll giggle with that big grown cousin of yours with the embarrassed face. If I could find any fault with you, I'd call you a damn foreigner." He remembered how she blessed the bread with the sign of the cross before she put it in the oven, how she knelt at the bedside every night, how she had a holy picture tacked to the wall in the closet.

One Saturday of a hot dusty June, Jim cut hay in the farm flat. The day was long. It was after six o'clock when the mower tumbled the last band of oats. He drove the clanking machine up into the barnyard and backed it into the implement shed, and there he unhitched the horses and turned them out to graze on the hills over Sunday. When he entered the

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kitchen Jelka was just putting his dinner on the table. He washed his hands and face and sat down to eat.

"I'm tired," he said, "but I think I'll go to Monterey anyway. There'll be a full moon."

Her soft eyes smiled.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "If you would like to go, I'll hitch up a rig and take you with me."

She smiled again and shook her head. "No, the stores would be closed. I would rather stay here."

"Well, all right, I'll saddle a horse then. I didn't think I was going. The stock's all turned out. Maybe I can catch a horse easy. Sure you don't want to go?"

"If it was early, and I could go to the stores—but it will be ten o'clock when you get there."

"Oh, no—well, anyway, on horseback I'll make it a little after nine."

Her mouth smiled to itself, but her eyes watched him for the development of a wish. Perhaps because he was tired from the long day's work, he demanded, "What are you thinking about?"

"Thinking about? I remember, you used to ask that nearly every day when we were first married."

"But what are you?" he insisted irritably.

"Oh—I'm thinking about the eggs under the black hen." She got up and went to the big calendar on the wall. "They will hatch to-morrow or maybe Monday."

It was almost dusk when he had finished shaving and putting on his blue serge suit and his new boots. Jelka had the dishes washed and put away. As Jim went through the kitchen he saw that she had taken the lamp to the table near the window, and that she sat beside it knitting a brown wool sock.

"Why do you sit there to-night?" he asked. "You always sit over here. You do funny things sometimes."

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Her eyes arose slowly from her flying hands. "The moon," she said quietly. "You said it would be full to-night. I want to see the moon rise."

"But you're silly. You can't see it from that window. I thought you knew direction better than that."

She smiled remotely. "I will look out of the bedroom window, then."

Jim put on his black hat and went out. Walking through the dark empty barn, he took a halter from the rack. On the grassy side-hill he whistled high and shrill. The horses stopped feeding and moved slowly in towards him, and stopped twenty feet away. Carefully he approached his bay gelding and moved his hand from its rump along its side and up and over its neck. The halter-strap clicked in its buckle. Jim turned and led the horse back to the barn. He threw his saddle on and cinched it tight, put his silver-bound bridle over the stiff ears, buckled the throat latch, knotted the tie-rope about the gelding's neck and fastened the neat coil-end to the saddle string. Then he slipped the halter and led the horse to the house. A radiant crown of soft red light lay over the eastern hills. The full moon would rise before the valley had completely lost the daylight.

In the kitchen Jelka still knitted by the window. Jim strode to the corner of the room and took up his 30-30 carbine. As he rammed cartridges into the magazine, he said, "The moon glow is on the hills. If you are going to see it rise, you better go outside now. It's going to be a good red one at rising."

"In a moment," she replied, "when I come to the end here." He went to her and patted her sleek head.

"Good night. I'll probably be back by noon to-morrow." Her dusky black eyes followed him out the door.

Jim thrust the rifle into his saddle-scabbard, and mounted

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and swung his horse down the canyon. On his right, from behind the blackening hills, the great red moon slid rapidly up. The double light of the day's last afterglow and the rising moon thickened the outlines of the trees and gave a mysterious new perspective to the hills. The dusty oaks shimmered and glowed, and the shade under them was black as velvet. A huge, long-legged shadow of a horse and half a man rode to the left and slightly ahead of Jim. From the ranches near and distant came the sound of dogs tuning up for a night of song. And the roosters crowed, thinking a new dawn had come too quickly. Jim lifted the gelding to a trot. The spattering hoof-steps echoed back from the castle behind him. He thought of blonde May at the "Three Star" in Monterey. "I'll be late. Maybe someone else 'll have her," he thought. The moon was clear of the hills now.

Jim had gone a mile when he heard the hoof-beats of a horse coming towards him. A horseman cantered up and pulled to a stop. "That you, Jim?"

"Yes, Oh, hello, George."

"I was just riding up to your place. I want to tell you—you know the spring-head at the upper end of my land?"

"Yes. I know."

"Well, I was up there this afternoon. I found a dead campfire and a calf's head and feet. The skin was in the fire, half-burned, but I pulled it out and it had your brand."

"The hell," said Jim. "How old was the fire?"

"The ground was still warm in the ashes. Last night, I guess. Look, Jim, I can't go up with you. I've got to go to town, but I thought I'd tell you, so you could take a look around."

Jim asked quietly, "Any idea how many men?"

"No. I didn't look close."

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"Well, I guess I better go up and look. I was going to town too. But if there are thieves working, I don't want to lose any more stock. I'll cut up through your land if you don't mind, George."

"I'd go with you, but I've got to go to town. You got a gun with you?"

"Oh yes, sure. Here under my leg. Thanks for telling me."

"That's all right. Cut through any place you want. Good night." The neighbour turned his horse and cantered back in the direction from which he had come.

For a few moments Jim sat in the moonlight, looking down at his stilted shadow. He pulled his rifle from its scabbard, levered a cartridge into the chamber, and held the gun across the pommel of his saddle. He turned left from the road, went up the little ridge, through the oak grove, over the grassy hog-back and down the other side into the next canyon.

In half an hour he had found the deserted camp. He turned over the heavy, leathery calf's head and felt its dusty tongue to judge by the dryness how long it had been dead. He lighted a match and looked at his brand on the half-burned hide. At last he mounted his horse again, rode over the bald grassy hills and crossed into his own land.

A warm summer wind was blowing on the hilltops. The moon, as it quartered up the sky, lost its redness and turned the colour of strong tea. Among the hills the coyotes were singing, and the dogs at the ranch houses below joined them with broken-hearted howling. The dark green oaks below and the yellow summer grass showed their colours in the moonlight.

Jim followed the sound of the cow-bells to his herd, and found them eating quietly, and a few deer feeding with them. He listened long for the sound of hoof-beats or the voices of men on the wind.

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It was after eleven when he turned his horse towards home. He rounded the west tower of the sandstone castle, rode through the shadow and out into the moonlight again. Below, the roofs of his barn and house shone dully. The bedroom window cast back a streak of reflection.

The feeding horses lifted their heads as Jim came down through the pasture. Their eyes glinted redly when they turned their heads.

Jim had almost reached the corral fence—he heard a horse stamping in the barn. His hand jerked the gelding down. He listened. It came again, the stamping from the barn. Jim lifted his rifle and dismounted silently. He turned his horse loose and crept towards the barn.

In the blackness he could hear the grinding of the horse's teeth as it chewed hay. He moved along the barn until he came to the occupied stall. After a moment of listening he scratched a match on the butt of his rifle. A saddled and bridled horse was tied in the stall. The bit was slipped under the chin and the cinch loosened. The horse stopped eating and turned its head towards the light.

Jim blew out the match and walked quickly out of the barn. He sat on the edge of the horse-trough and looked into the water. His thoughts came so slowly that he put them into words and said them under his breath.

"Shall I look through the window? No. My head would throw a shadow in the room."

He regarded the rifle in his hand. Where it had been rubbed and handled, the black gun-finish had worn off, leaving the metal silvery.

At last he stood up with decision and moved towards the house. At the steps, an extended foot tried each board tenderly before he put his weight on it. The three ranch dogs came out from under the house and shook themselves,

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stretched and sniffed, wagged their tails and went back to bed.

The kitchen was dark, but Jim knew where every piece of furniture was. He put out his hand and touched the corner of the table, a chair-back, the towel hanger, as he went along. He crossed the room so silently that even he could hear only his breath and the whisper of his trousers legs together, and the beating of his watch in his pocket. The bedroom door stood open and spilled a patch of moonlight on the kitchen floor. Jim reached the door at last and peered through.

The moonlight lay on the white bed. Jim saw Jelka lying on her back, one soft bare arm flung across her forehead and eyes. He could not see who the man was, for his head was turned away. Jim watched, holding his breath. Then Jelka twitched in her sleep and the man rolled his head and sighed—Jelka's cousin, her grown, embarrassed cousin.

Jim turned and quickly stole back across the kitchen and down the back steps. He walked up the yard to the water-trough again, and sat down on the edge of it. The moon was white as chalk, and it swam in the water, and lighted the straws and barley dropped by the horses' mouths. Jim could see the mosquito wigglers, tumbling up and down, end over end, in the water, and he could see a newt lying in the sun moss in the bottom of the trough.

He cried a few dry, hard, smothered sobs, and wondered why, for his thought was of the grassed hilltops and of the lonely summer wind whisking along.

His thought turned to the way his mother used to hold a bucket to catch the throat blood when his father killed a pig. She stood as far away as possible and held the bucket at arms'-length to keep her clothes from getting spattered.

Jim dipped his hand into the trough and stirred the moon to broken, swirling streams of light. He wetted his forehead

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with his damp hands and stood up. This time he did not move so quietly, but he crossed the kitchen on tiptoe and stood in the bedroom door. Jelka moved her arm and opened her eyes a little. Then the eyes sprang wide, then they glistened with moisture. Jim looked into her eyes; his face was blank of expression. A little drop ran out of Jelka's nose and lodged in the hollow of her upper lip. She stared back at him.

Jim cocked the rifle. The steel click sounded through the house. The man on the bed stirred uneasily in his sleep. Jim's hands were quivering. He raised the gun to his shoulder and held it tightly to keep from shaking. Over the sights he saw the little white square between the man's brows and hair. The front sight wavered a moment and then came to rest.

The gun crash tore the air. Jim, still looking down the barrel, saw the whole bed jolt under the blow. A small, black, bloodless hole was in the man's forehead. But behind, the hollow-point bullet took brain and bone and splashed them on the pillow.

Jelka's cousin gurgled in his throat. His hands came crawling out from under the covers like big white spiders, and they walked for a moment, then shuddered and fell quiet.

Jim looked slowly back at Jelka. Her nose was running. Her eyes had moved from him to the end of the rifle. She whined softly, like a cold puppy.

Jim turned in panic. His boot-heels beat on the kitchen floor, but outside, he moved slowly towards the watering-trough again. There was a taste of salt in his throat, and his heart heaved painfully. He pulled his hat off and dipped his head into the water, then he leaned over and vomited on the ground. In the house he could hear Jelka moving about. She whimpered like a puppy. Jim straightened up, weak and dizzy.

JOHN STEINBECK

He walked tiredly through the corral and into the pasture. His saddled horse came at his whistle. Automatically he tightened the cinch, mounted and rode away, down the road to the valley. The squat black shadow travelled under him. The moon sailed high and white. The uneasy dogs barked monotonously.

At daybreak a buckboard and pair trotted up to the ranch yard, scattering the chickens. A deputy sheriff and a coroner sat in the seat. Jim Moore half reclined against his saddle in the wagon-box. His tired gelding followed behind. The deputy sheriff set the brake and wrapped the lines around it. The men dismounted.

Jim asked, "Do I have to go in? I'm too tired and wrought up to see it now."

The coroner pulled his lip and studied. "Oh, I guess not. We'll tend to things and look around."

Jim sauntered away towards the watering-trough. "Say," he called, "kind of clean up a little, will you? You know."

The men went on into the house.

In a few minutes they emerged, carrying the stiffened body between them. It was wrapped up in a comforter. They eased it up into the wagon-box. Jim walked back towards them. "Do I have to go in with you now?"

"Where's your wife, Mr. Moore?" the deputy sheriff demanded.

"I don't know," he said wearily. "She's somewhere around."

"You're sure you didn't kill her too?"

"No. I didn't touch her. I'll find her and bring her in this afternoon. That is, if you don't want me to go in with you now."

"We've got your statement," the coroner said. "And by

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God, we've got eyes, haven't we, Will? Of course there's a technical charge of murder against you, but it'll be dismissed. Always is in this part of the country. Go kind of light on your wife, Mr. Moore."

"I won't hurt her," said Jim.

He stood and watched the buckboard jolt away. He kicked his feet reluctantly in the dust. The hot June sun showed its face over the hills and flashed viciously on the bedroom window.

Jim went slowly into the house, and brought out a nine-foot, loaded bull whip. He crossed the yard and walked into the barn. And as he climbed the ladder to the hayloft, he heard the high, puppy whimpering start.

When Jim came out of the barn again, he carried Jelka over his shoulder. By the watering-trough he set her tenderly on the ground. Her hair was littered with bits of hay. The back of her shirtwaist was streaked with blood.

Jim wetted his bandana at the pipe and washed her bitten lips, and washed her face and brushed back her hair. Her dusty black eyes followed every move he made.

"You hurt me," she said. "You hurt me bad."

He nodded gravely. "Bad as I could without killing you."

The sun shone hotly on the ground. A few blowflies buzzed about, looking for the blood.

Jelka's thickened lips tried to smile. "Did you have any breakfast at all?"

"No," he said. "None at all."

"Well, then, I'll fry you up some eggs." She struggled painfully to her feet.

"Let me help you," he said. "I'll help you get your shirtwaist off. It's drying stuck to your back. It'll hurt."

"No. I'll do it myself." Her voice had a peculiar reson-

JOHN STEINBECK

ance in it. Her dark eyes dwelt warmly on him for a moment, and then she turned and limped into the house.

Jim waited, sitting on the edge of the watering-trough. He saw the smoke start up out of the chimney and sail straight up into the air. In a very few moments Jelka called him from the kitchen door.

"Come, Jim. Your breakfast."

Four fried eggs and four thick slices of bacon lay on a warmed plate for him. "The coffee will be ready in a minute," she said.

"Won't you eat?"

"No. Not now. My mouth's too sore."

He ate his eggs hungrily and then looked up at her. Her black hair was combed smooth. She had on a fresh white shirtwaist. "We're going to town this afternoon," he said. "I'm going to order lumber. We'll build a new house farther down the canyon."

Her eyes darted to the closed bedroom door and then back to him. "Yes," she said. "That will be good." And then, after a moment, "Will you whip me any more—for this?"

"No, not any more, for this."

Her eyes smiled. She sat down on a chair beside him, and Jim put out his hand and stroked her hair and the back of her neck.

LILIKA NAKOS

*The Rescue Party*¹

EVERY Sunday our Aunt Katinko took my brother and me to see our father, who was kept in a madhouse near Athens. We rented a coach by the hour, and took the old highway that still leads to Eleusis. We rode along through clouds of dust, but for us, still children, everything seemed made for our amusement. And when, at the crossroads, the coachman got down to drink a glass of wine, and my aunt scolded us, we jumped from the coach to pick the violets that bordered the roadside. When we came to Daphni we loved going through the immense garden of the madhouse, full of rosemary and rose-laurel.

In a great, white-washed room my father awaited us impatiently, wearing his best Sunday clothes. There were other patients in the room. All were neatly dressed and seemed quite quiet. To us children these people were as reasonable as any others. When, therefore, my father complained bitterly to my aunt of the injustice of his being locked up there, we were persuaded that he was in the right against everybody. He would take us on his knees, and loved to caress us, asking for news of our cat and our dog,

¹ Translated from the French by Allan Ross Macdougall.

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kissing us longingly. He called me "his only consolation in this world." And there were tears in his eyes when he had to take leave of us.

One Sunday afternoon he complained more bitterly than ever before of the injustice of his being shut up. He spoke of the ingratitude of men, and more especially of that of my mother. And his eyes were so sad as they looked at us that my brother began to cry. Then he drew us to him and began again to embrace us, and in a corner of the room, while my aunt gossiped with the wife of a patient, he began to supplicate us softly to deliver him from that hell. And turning to me he called me "his only hope in his misfortune." He told us of his miseries; how the attendants were hard-hearted and unkind to him; how they beat him with a great whip. He said he would await us every day of that week to come and deliver him. He would be by the side of the garden that gave on the highway, not far from his cabin. All three of us then, happy and free, would be able to roam about and see the world. I threw myself into my father's arms and, my voice choking with emotion, I swore to free him.

That evening in our little beds there were great whisperings and grave councils. We swore not to let our projects be suspected. A dull, rancorous pain animated us against what our father called "the world," and above all against our mother, whom we detested. Yet for us to flee from the house was not altogether easy. My aunt slept in the room next to ours, and always left the door open. In the end we decided to rise very early in the morning and run away while everybody was still asleep. For fear I might not awake in the morning I promised my brother not to sleep all night. The evening before our departure I thought it well to take a large piece of bread and cheese from the kitchen;

THE RESCUE PARTY

these I slipped into my pockets. And when night fell I sat on my bed and began to watch.

Through the open windows I saw the moon in the blue-black of the heavens, and a great sadness came over me. It was one of the lovely Athenian nights heavy with scents. A cypress tree waved slowly to and fro in the warm night air. I thought of my father, of his unhappiness, and I began to weep softly. The hours were long in passing. The little red watch-light before the icons had troubled tremblings, and the saints in the iconostase looked down upon me with their familiar faces. My heavy eyes drooped with sleep.

Finally the first glimmers of the dawn appeared and I promptly arose. I awakened my little brother, dressed him hastily, and out we went on tip-toe. When we came to the bottom of the stairs we found the door locked, and so we climbed into the garden by the window and fearlessly got away. Once in the street we began to run for fear of being surprised by some neighbour. Having reached the square of our quarter, and out of all danger of being recognised, we decided to walk to the Eleusis highway. There, as soon as a cart or wagon passed, we could slip on behind, the way the street boys do.

This we did, and after an hour of jolting, racked and covered with dust, we jumped down near Daphni without ever being seen. We hid ourselves in a little wood of pine trees white with dust and twisted by the winds. Then we walked through the wood, avoiding the inn where we were known. Finally we came to the walls that surrounded the madhouse property. From the hillock where we were we could see the lay-out of the place, with the main building, its wings, and the different châlets or cabins. I even saw my father, who was watering the plants before his cabin. But we did not dare go near. There were attendants all about,

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watching. We lay down under the pines then, and our eyes never left the property where such an active life seemed to reign. All the patients were working in the garden.

So passed the morning. When finally the noon-hour bell rang out I took the bread and cheese from my pockets and we began to eat. The heat was quite bearable, but the scrubby pines were not sufficient to keep a shade over us. We began to be tortured by thirst, but waited patiently on, seeing that the work in the place was slowing down. One by one the attendants went off. My father sat on the sill of his cabin eating the soup they had brought him. At last, when all the patients and the nurses had entered the building, we descended the hillock and approached the side of the garden where my father was to await us. Reaching the gate, we hid ourselves behind a wall covered with briars and stayed until all sounds had ceased. Finally the gardens seemed deserted, and we approached the great iron gate. My father was there awaiting us, but he seemed very agitated. I stood by the gate, my face between the bars, and began to call him. My brother, hanging on near me, held out his arms to him.

I: "Little father, little father, here we are!"

My little brother: "Darling little father, we have come to find you."

I: "Come quickly, little father, come quickly, no one is watching . . ."

My father turned about, looked at us, but did not know us.

My little brother: "Come, little father, come . . ."

I: "Be quick, little father, you have only to push the gate . . ."

My little brother: "Yes, you have only to push the gate, for we're not able . . ."

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I: "You'll see how happy we three are going to be, little father . . ."

My little brother: "Be quick, quick, there's no one watching the garden . . ."

My father turned round to look at us again, stared a long while, then turned his back on us. Desperate, our eyes filled with tears, we then held out our hands through the bars and begged him to come.

When he turned about to us that time we were frozen stiff with terror. His face was no longer that of our father; it was of one demented. Trembling with fright, we let our hands slip from the bars of the gate and ran to hide behind the wall. We heard father go into his cabin. There was a great silence; we could only hear the wind in the pines, a warm wind that filled our mouths with dust. Suddenly a horrible cry tore through space, an inhuman shriek that made us tremble all over . . .

Then there was a strange sound as though several horses were champing in that cursed cabin, then whistlings and guttural cries. Immediately an attendant ran over and bolted the door of the cabin. Then he whistled. A sister appeared. "Quick, the strait-jacket. Mr. Lazos has an attack."

There was a dreadful noise; a man-hunt in the frightful cabin. Four attendants came running. Someone cried: "The hose, bring the hose quickly; he's hanging on to the beams again."

There was a grinding of teeth, a slashing of the whip. Still hidden behind the wall, we trembled with terror and anguish. For an instant I raised my head and saw a hand clutching the edge of the roof—a monstrously bloody hand, clutching desperately. And the whole cabin was shaken by fits like a living thing. And all seemed to reel. . . . There

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was something like the fall of a person knocked down; moans, tears, childish sobs. And then nothing.

A great silence hovered over the cabin and the property. The heat became unbearable; we breathed with difficulty and thirst tormented us. I felt my head was about to burst. . . . We did not dare make any move for fear we might be surprised by the attendant who was now watching the cabin.

And so the long hours trailed away, while we remained pressed against the briars, stifling and dripping with perspiration. Finally the sun went down over the sea; a cool wind came up to restore us and give us courage. The attendants began to circulate in the place and open the cabin doors. Softly, slowly, tip-toeing, we approached the great iron gate. We saw father resting on a chaise-longue, his face pale and bruised, his hands bandaged. He lay motionless, and on his face there was such an expression of gentleness, that our hearts were sore. Two great tears rolled down his cheeks.

Unable to bear it any longer, we rushed the door and ran towards him. He recognised us immediately, held out his arms and crushed us to his breast. In a trembling voice I asked him then if he wasn't going to come with us. Sadly he shook his head. . . . We would have to go without him. As several patients came near us, father told us to hurry away. He pressed us to him and blessed us with his wounded hands. . . .

So we went off by the dusty highway with tightened throats. Hand in hand we walked along painfully, night falling, our heads lowered, never saying a word.

EDWIN MUIR

What is the Short Story?

IN the last resort there is no way of judging a short story as a short story. I know that this view is considered heretical by specialists in short-story criticism; but I was driven to it after reading Mr. Ellis Roberts' interesting and suggestive essay in the July issue. I agreed with almost everything he said; and I agreed completely with his three chief points, which were: "There must be a story. The story must be the author's. The story must be written." But then I realised that this was equally true of any novel, or fairy tale, or play; indeed, of any fictitious narrative whatever, whether in prose or verse, and no matter of what length. It is partially true, also, of most good history and newspaper reporting, in which facts are imaginatively interpreted, or arranged in a significant pattern. And the reason why it covers such a large class of literature is perfectly simple: because human life, which is the main theme of literature, is a life in Time, and so can best be represented as a sequence. If descriptions of human life, then, are almost invariably stories, that is a fact determined not merely by certain canons of literary art, which a daring innovator may abolish sometime

in the future, but by the nature of life itself. If life were a matter of extension merely and nothing more, a picture would be all that could be made of it. But it is also a matter of temporal progression; even the rocks have a history; hence the fact that the great majority of descriptions of the world are stories. This is a truism, but it should be remembered when one considers such things.

Actually, then, there seems to be no essential difference between the novel and the short story except a difference in length. A great number of short stories deal with a single situation, and a great number of novels contain a whole succession of situations; but there is nothing inherent in the nature of either to make this compulsory. A short story can relate the whole life of a character from the cradle to the grave: it has been done by Maupassant and Flaubert, and by many others besides. If it contains a complete life story, naturally a great deal that the full-length novelist would have included must be left out: but that is all. Again, if the writer describes a single scene or situation, obviously he cannot do it with the particularity of Laurence Sterne or Mr. James Joyce in "Ulysses." Considerations of space prevent him. Or at least that is one of the ways of looking at the problem.

I think it is easy to show, however, that that is the wrong way of looking at the problem, though it is the one on which most of the theories, critical and economic, regarding the peculiar nature of the short story have been founded. Such theories postulate the existence of a hypothetical number of blank pages in a magazine, and from these blank pages they deduce, sometimes with great skill, what the short story should be. Faced with that predetermined blank, the short-story writer, who is generally pictured as suffering from a consuming passion to write at great length, is supposed to evolve a self-denying technique, whose sole purpose is to

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fill that blank and no more than fill it. In this theory, the magazine becomes the first cause and the sole law of the short story; and its influence is further strengthened by various correspondence classes which are formed to instruct young writers in the required technique. Actually it is obvious that any short story worth reading comes about in quite a different way. Doubtless many good writers are forced by their consciousness of the number of columns waiting to be filled to conform partially to the technique. But all purely technical theories of the short story help only to stereotype it. And the majority of them are based, as I have tried to show, on commercial considerations, and often without the knowledge of their professors.

If one can forget these fatal blank pages, it is obvious that the length of any fictitious narrative is really determined by the nature of the writer's gifts, or the theme which he is treating, or the way in which he deals with it. I do not know very much about the origins of "The Arabian Nights," but it is clear that the author or authors, or collator or collators, had a natural genius for writing tales of a moderate length. So had Boccaccio, Hoffmann and Poe, and the many great writers who have since written in the same way. There is no trace of short-story technique in "The Arabian Nights," or "The Decameron," or Hoffmann's tales, for these came before the magazine had become the universal arbiter of form. There are traces of it in Poe, who has done much to restrict the scope of the short story; but Poe was both a journalist and a man who had to invent a theory to fit all the work he produced, whether in prose or verse. There are traces in Maupassant too, for Maupassant often had to fill a specified column; but it is still easy to see how this made his art suffer. Read one after another his stories produce, in spite of their variety, a sense of monotony and of restriction, and not, like "The

Decameron," a feeling of greater and greater freedom the longer one goes on. Among modern writers Chekhov gives most strongly this feeling of mounting freedom, and it is partly, I think, because he never seems to have written to a formula, and scouted literary theories. No other short-story writer pours out his genius more lavishly and naturally; he has the same abundance in one sphere as Tolstoy has in another. Maupassant's stories show extraordinary variety within set limits, but in Chekhov, with equal variety, one is hardly conscious of any limits at all; it is hard to place some of his stories in any category. His work ranges from the short novel to the anecdote and the impression; and though he doubtless sometimes filled a page, there is no sign that he ever allowed that to influence his method of telling a story.

Theories of the short story, then, probably do nothing but harm: they circumscribe the author's range, and while morbidly spurring his ingenuity thwart his imagination. They narrow a form which should be as free and various as the novel itself, a form through which anything at all can be expressed if the author can forget what is expected of him. At its most brilliantly and mechanically effective, the short story is little better than a sort of monstrosity, which we may admire for its perverted skill, or take pleasure in for its empty ingenuity, but which no one would ever dream of judging as literature. Most of Ambrose Bierce's and O. Henry's stories seem to me to belong to this class, a good number of Mr. Kipling's, a few of Mr. Hemingway's, none, so far as I know, of Mr. Wells, or D. H. Lawrence, or Katherine Mansfield, or Miss Colburn Mayne, and very few of such younger writers as Mr. Bates, Mr. Manhood, Mr. Beachcroft and Mr. Calder-Marshall. Mr. Wells and D. H. Lawrence use the short story with magnificent naturalness and freedom, and are clearly cumbered by no theories about it. Katherine Mansfield was

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more closely interested in it; she learned from Chekhov that the short story could express anything she wished to express, and she set herself to put more and more into it, and to rid it as completely as possible of inessential conventions. This is the aim also of the best among the younger writers. The present movement is one away from obvious technical brilliance to a naturalness and unobtrusiveness so complete that sometimes the story hardly seems a story at all. This naturalness can in turn, of course, become a specialised technique: that is unavoidable, for nature produces copyists. But there can be no doubt that since Katherine Mansfield the short story has widened its scope enormously and become a form which can be judged, like the novel, on purely literary grounds. It would be absurd to judge Boccaccio as a short-story writer; it is equally absurd to judge Chekhov or Katherine Mansfield or a modern writer such as Mr. Bates by such a standard: their work belongs to literature, and that, and not its length or its particular technique, is the important thing about it.

In the work of such writers as Katherine Mansfield the story obviously matters less than it does, for instance, in that of O. Henry or Mr. Kipling. I do not know whether Mr. Ellis Roberts was thinking of something like this when he deplored the tendency in the modern short story for the story to disappear, and held up Maupassant and Mr. Kipling as models. If he was, then this is one point on which I am forced to disagree with him. A story is not more completely a story because it contains a great number of incidents: for essentially a story is a description, not of things happening, but of how things happen. "William the Norman beat Harold at the Battle of Hastings" is a statement: to get a story we should have to be told how he did it. The difference between the work of Katherine Mansfield and Mr. Kipling is a difference in the emphasis which they lay on things happen-

ing and the way in which things happen. Mr. Kipling, of course, does tell how things happen; there is no other way of relating a story; but Katherine Mansfield's apprehension of the How is so much more complex and discriminating that it changes the whole quality of the result. Her stories, like his, always contain a point and a surprise, but it is a different point, and a different surprise. She makes us look at life again, with a greater discrimination, and encourages us to search for what is concealed beneath the plane of obvious action. Mr. Kipling, it may be objected, does that too; but he does not do it so effectually and profoundly; and a return to him would be a return from a complex and highly aware form of art to a simple one. To advise a writer like Mr. Bates to model himself on Mr. Kipling is as beside the mark as it would have been to ask Dostoevsky to model himself on Dumas. I do not imply by this that Mr. Bates is a Dostoevsky or Mr. Kipling a Dumas, but merely that nobody should be expected to disobey the promptings of his talent, and write in a manner that is too simple to suit it. Actually, the short story seems to be in a healthier state now than it was in the time of Mr. Kipling, though it has shed its simplicity. It is closer to literature, and a truer reflection of life.

STRUTHERS BURT

Entertaining the Islanders¹

David Banastre, a successful business man, is suddenly confronted with the realisation that he loathes all the measured capers, the hypocrisies and the moral misbehaviour of the New York society in which he moves. On the night that he makes this discovery, he meets Anita Fulton, who is married to a cad, Gene Fulton, and who is as tired as David of the social toils in which she is caught. David, for relief, travels from island to island in the Caribbean. Anita goes to her uncle, Julius Wack, a rich and cynical philosopher, who spends a large part of the year on the island of St. Birgitta, set like a jewel in that glamorous sea. Here David eventually arrives; and against the lovely background of the island, and to the accompaniment of Mr. Wack's amusing and philosophical comment, David and Anita fall in love. Previous instalments revealed the fulfilment of their love for each other.

At last David has to return to New York. Mr. Wack invites him to go with him in his yacht, the Savonarola, and the following extract, rich with Mr. Wack's inimitable comments on the varying aspects of life and human affairs, describes their passage back to New York.

[Previous instalments have appeared in our June, July, August, and September numbers.]

THE Savonarola poked her delicate nose northward. For a couple of days she blew the foam of tropic summer seas—cloud white above intense deep blue—from her hawser

¹ *Entertaining the Islanders*, by Struthers Burt. Lovat Dickson, 8s. 6d. net.

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holes, and then the summer seas changed overnight to seas cooler and less intense. The *Savonarola* was off the Carolina coast and David, looking to the west, imagined endless beaches with palmettos and stunted gnarled pines lining them, and back of these, cypress swamps, gold green in the sun, the tall trees hung with moss, and back of the cypress swamps, green neat farms with low white houses. The farms were cut squarely from forests of tall grave pines, and the forests and the houses and the banks along the roads would be yellow with jasmine, and pink and white with cherokee roses, and white with magnolia, and shimmering green with myrtle. And a little while before, everywhere would have been the white shining of the dog-wood.

He and Mr. Wack breakfasted together with silent exultation. Both felt too well to risk conversation lest talk get out of hand. David's arm, which had been in a sling for a few days, no longer hurt him. After breakfast he and Mr. Wack read or slept, or watched the sea. Then they had a cocktail before lunch. After lunch, they read or slept, or watched the sea until tea-time. After tea they went to their cabins and dressed, and meeting once more on deck, had two cocktails. With dinner they had wine. If, after dinner, they still felt marvellously well, they had a whisky-and-soda before going to bed.

During lunch, and with tea, and after tea, and while they drank cocktails; and at dinner, and after dinner, lying out in deck chairs, they discussed the world.

"I wish," said Mr. Wack, "somebody would arise to defend the cocktail. I am tired of hearing it defamed, especially by Europeans who for the most part adore cocktails, and by those Americans who drink too many. Vermouth is a sickening drink; sherry and bitters are uninspired. Vodka is petrol. You can drink too much of anything, you know,

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even water, just as you can eat too much of anything. Too much bread is a poison. Properly taken the cocktail is a blessed and honourable drink." He paused, lit a cigarette, and resumed. "The sonnet of drinks. Condensed, formalised, passionate. A cocktail points the day. It turns your thoughts from sadness to gaiety. It is something to look forward to, which is always a good thing. It puts a lovely little pin-point of expectation at the pit of your stomach. It releases the gastric juices. It suddenly makes you think ugly women charming. You even feel tender towards your men friends. And then, the making of a cocktail is a pretty ceremony. . . . Just two, of course, no more. That's where so many people go wrong, and the innocent cocktail is blamed. The cocktail is made and controlled by man; man is not made and controlled by the cocktail. No man has to drink more than two cocktails. With three he becomes dull and ruins the taste of the food to follow. With four he becomes porcine. Pretty women are merely bundles of heaving flesh. Nasty!" concluded Mr. Wack.

"Look here, David, what we've got to learn to do—we Americans, perhaps, especially—is to love life, or, at least, respect it in all its manifestations. That's the only way we'll ever achieve any real power over life or our surroundings. Like all the northern nations, we're too much given to hating things, to reforming them, and not enough given to trying to understand them. You can't obliterate anything, all you can do is to try to turn it into proper channels. Transmute it; discipline it. No lasting victory has ever been won by hate. Look at Germany. There's an example. The whole world set about hating Germany, and see what we get in return. You can't cure evil by despising it, if there is such a thing as evil—I'm rather coming to the conclusion that so-called evil is merely misplaced good; the ill-directed efflorescence of

good. Power gone to waste. That may even be true of cancer for all we know. Cancer may be merely a too-powerful form of life as yet misunderstood. Perhaps the attitude of the average hater of drunkenness is the simplest example of what I mean. Drunkenness and wine are not the same thing, and, for all we know, the state of exhilaration which is the early stage of drunkenness might be an excellent adjunct to life if it could be produced harmlessly—perhaps it's the way we ought to feel if we were functioning properly; but at all events, you can't cure drunkenness by hating drink. Drunkenness is nothing more than the possibility of evil inherent in all good things. It's merely good misused. And that brings us back to the cocktail again. If you hate wine you'll never cure drunkenness. You can only cure drunkenness by respecting wine and so refusing to debase and dishonour a lovely gift of nature. That's what the French know, and they know the same thing about food. They respect food too much to be gluttons. No, you can't conquer anything by hating it."

He studied the sunset, blood red above a violet sea.

"The most beautiful sunsets in the world," he said, "are on the Ægean Sea. What an odd race the English are, and isn't it a pity that we never can get on with them? Fundamentally we get on with them because, fundamentally, we are closer to them than to any other race, but on the surface we are bitterly antipathetic. On the surface, we understand even a Chinaman better. It's a great tragedy. Laying aside our own faults, which are numerous, I wonder if some of it doesn't come from the habit the English have of seeing themselves as they want to see themselves, and other races as the dark side of their own brilliant reflection. They have more preconceived ideas about themselves, you know, and about other nations, than any race in the world, and their preconceived ideas frequently have nothing to do with the

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truth. Once again, the cocktail is a point in evidence." He chuckled. "The cocktail seems to be a fruitful test. Well, here's one fact, anyway—the English invented the cocktail, we didn't. Then, because certain Americans get drunk in Europe on cocktails, the English blame us. Meanwhile, they drink cocktails themselves and frequently get drunk. But they tell themselves no English gentleman gets drunk, and so, of course, no English gentleman gets drunk. As a matter of fact, English gentlemen frequently get drunk, and a drunken Englishman is the drunkenest man in the world. One suspects that one is seeing the real Englishman, however."

Mr. Wack threw away his cigarette.

"They have, none the less, one great virtue—the English," he added, "although they carry it to excess—they have a sense of form. Even the most drunken Englishman has a sense of form. It is interesting if you follow it out."

He studied the sunset again.

"I wonder," he asked, "how close the modern Englishman is to his Elizabethan ancestor? On the surface, not very close, I imagine. The real Englishman is a sensitive, passionate, lyric fellow; drunken, loud-mouthed, insular and imaginative. Gay, immensely brave, lazy until he gets started. All their swiftness is supplied by Celts—Scotch or Irish. I'm sure that's the real Englishman. I've seen him drunk, and I've read history. Not so very long ago I saw some eighteenth-century prints. One was called 'A Quiet Night at Almack's,' and another, 'Gentlemen at Cards at White's.' In one corner the intoxicated were piled up, and those still able to play were bellowing, waving their arms, vomiting, and cursing. Well," said Mr. Wack, "there you have it.

"And then, somewhere towards the beginning of the nineteenth century they had a change of heart. They travelled

more, they realised what the other races were saying about them. So they had a change of heart and reversed the whole manner of life of their public schools and universities. We got the modern Englishman." Mr. Wack chuckled. "Arnold of Rugby. Aristotle with an eyeglass. If they had been a little more clear-thinking, like the French, they would have done better. As it was, they were a trifle too thorough. Having decided to become gentlemen, they were so anxious about it, and have been so anxious ever since, that they make other, less self-conscious races uncomfortable. However, they have a sense of form, and until the war they certainly put over on the rest of the world for a hundred years or more their own idea of themselves. Now they would do better if they would become just a trifle more sure of themselves, just a trifle more careless, and stop constantly bolstering up their own doubts by comparing themselves favourably to everyone else. That's their trouble—they won't let other people alone."

"I like a lot of them individually," said David. "They're a charming race individually—when you get to know them."

"The old statement!" agreed Mr. Wack. "And quite true." He meditated. "At all events, I hope that now, having got over our own Elizabethan period, we will also achieve a sense of form, but not quite so self-consciously. Manners don't entirely make the man, David, but they are an indication, as a rule, of what is underneath. Form with nothing to back it up is bad, but lack of form with nothing to back it up is even worse. Long ago I came to the conclusion that good form, good technique, used for evil is far less likely to cause lasting harm than bad form used for good. Bad form used for good, among other things, makes everyone hate good. The ideal, of course, is good form used for good."

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He lit another cigarette and blew smoke through his nose.

"And once again," he said, "form, like a sense of *noblesse oblige* . . . and to some extent they are the same thing—both the result of vicariousness; of a man's sense of his relations to others . . . and once again, form is more necessary to a democrat than to anyone else. Yes, it most certainly is. One of the dangers of democracy is that it increases man's sense of his importance as a political animal and decreases his sense of importance as a social animal. He thinks that socially it doesn't make much difference what he does, he's just John Smith. He forgets that all John Smiths—and there're a lot of them—are judged by him. In the eyes of the world he's a symbol of his political and social theories. He's always regarded as a specimen, not as an individual. If an American gets drunk publicly, everyone says, 'There's a drunken American!' but if an earl gets drunk publicly, we shrug our shoulders and say, 'Lord So-and-So's drunk again.'"

"I wish you'd tell me," said David, "why you've never remarried. It seems odd—a man of your disposition."

"Domestic?" inquired Mr. Wack in his fluting voice.

"Yes. . . . Very much so."

Mr. Wack chuckled.

"I am."

He was silent for a moment.

The half-moon of a week before had changed to a full moon. The sea was golden with it . . . a smooth sea moving just enough so that the moon picked out in more burnished gold the long summits of the swells.

"It's very easy to explain," said Mr. Wack, after a silence longer than usual. "I never have been able to get over an individual I have known intimately—that is, a friend I adore or a woman I love. They stick with me. If they die, they're ghosts. Or rather, they never die. You can stand just so

much of that, you know. That's one reason why, if my marriage had lasted, I would never have got a divorce. At least, so far as I am concerned. Possibly my wife would have divorced me. She was very beautiful and she didn't love me. I found that out. I didn't blame her; I was sorry for her." Mr. Wack hesitated; then his calm voice again disturbed the moonlight. "Unfortunately I loved her a lot. I haven't been able to forget her. There's one thing—in the house we used to live in there were stairs polished and without carpets. I used to hear her coming down them. You know how individual footsteps are . . . no two persons the same. Never. Haunting. Well, I don't believe that I'd like to listen to another woman's footsteps coming downstairs. I'd be resentful——"

Mr. Wack interrupted himself. He was silent again for a long minute; then he chuckled.

"If it wasn't for that," he said, "I probably would have remarried. A man of my age needs a woman badly, and now I am old enough not to blame a woman in the least for marrying me for my money. Maybe in a few years none of us will have any money, anyway. At all events, I wouldn't blame her, I would understand. There's a former opera singer who has practically blackmailed me for years, and it's very amusing because my relationship with her has been of the most innocent kind. She's living in Monte Carlo now. I merely wrote her one or two rather flowery letters"—Mr. Wack paused—"in the days when I wrote flowery letters." His voice was indulgent. "I'm sorry for her, poor thing. She's poor. She's lost her voice. So I let her blackmail me. Sometimes I think that eventually I may marry her. She's charming. She's more or less of a lady. She's not exactly aware that she's blackmailing me—she's merely Italian. But I don't know. . . . I don't know whether I would be able to marry her."

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He placed his cigarette on the deck, ground the fire out with his heel, and recrossed his feet on the deck chair.

"David," he said, "marriage is everything or nothing. It's a welding, it's an interpenetration, it's two persons becoming one so that half the time each confuses himself, or herself, with the other. I thought about it a great deal during the few years I was married, and I've thought about it since. Of course, there's no perfection. The welding, the interpenetration isn't perfect, but that's the aim. And if people don't aim at it, they'll never get much out of marriage. But if they do aim at it and approach anywhere near to the welding, marriage is the most beautiful relationship in the world, and don't let any fool tell you it isn't—any unmarried fool and, especially, any married fool who has never aimed at anything or who, having aimed, has through ill-luck or folly or selfishness missed by a mile or two the mark. It's woman's flesh made man's flesh, and man's brains made woman's brains, and the other way about. It's breath made breath. It's sickness made common sickness. Health made common health. It's an ecstasy of welding. The way broken iron must feel when it's put together again. It seems to me that most people don't understand this at all. They think of themselves as two individuals living together. That isn't it. Of course it's two individuals living together, and the fact that they are individuals is what makes the welding, the two-part thing, valuable. Nothing is valuable without the use of will and a sense of direction back of it. It's the knowledge that you are an individual, using that individuality to weld it to another individuality, that enhances both your individuality and the welding.

"There mustn't be reserve—any more than can be helped. You must own your woman and she you. You'll behave badly, and so will she—that's becoming entirely the in-

dividual again and forgetting the welding. Every now and then she'll vanish completely, or you will. Vanish mentally and spiritually; perhaps physically as well. You'll fight, of course. The individual will go off on walks by itself, but if you own her enough, and she owns you, the individual—you or she—will come back. You own her, David. You own her—that's the point. And she you. This modern stuff is nonsense, and already we're beginning to find it out. I don't mean any selfish proprietorship, such as used to be the thing; I most certainly don't mean jealousy—if that can be avoided; I mean the sense that she's your woman, and you're her man. And if anyone sneers at that, tell that person for me he doesn't know what he's talking about. A man ought to think a lot just about his woman's physical presence, and a woman about her man's. The muscles and the walk, and the way the head is set, and all the varying expressions of the face. And the body—every inch and curve and shadow of it. And the feeling of every inch of it. They ought to do that because that other face and body is the other part of themselves." Mr. Wack reached down to the deck, picked up his glass, and finished his highball. "I get excited," he said, "because the one thing needed is thought—in marriage, perhaps, more than in anything else. And, of course, the one thing people won't do, even intelligent people, is to think.

"David, one of the troubles with us Americans—so long as we seem to be on that subject—is that the American woman has never made man proud of being a man, and the American man has never made his woman proud of being a woman . . . just the mere pride of femininity and masculinity. We're badly trained in that direction. The fine hard muscles of men; the fine soft whiteness of women. But much more than that . . . much more than any physical thing. The fact of being a man; the fact of being a woman. The

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texture of the masculine mind; the texture of the feminine mind. War between the sexes . . . nonsense ! ”

Mr. Wack lay for a few moments looking silently at the sea, then he got slowly to his feet.

The golden torch of the moon went out across the sea endlessly.

Mr. Wack coughed with embarrassment.

“ Well, I’m going to turn in,” he said. His voice became muffled. “ I find myself saying things to you, David, I’ve never said to anyone else. I hope . . . I’ve enjoyed more than I can say meeting you down at St. Birgitta . . . I hope we’ll see a lot of each other in the future. I feel exactly as if you were my son. That’s pleasant.”

David, too, had arisen.

“ Thank you,” he said gravely. “ Are you going to be in New York any length of time ? ”

“ No, I’m going out to Indiana right away.”

“ When will you be back ? ”

“ The first week or so of June, but only long enough to get aboard this boat and sail for France. I’ll call you up, however, one of the two or three nights I’m in New York, and we’ll dine together. . . . Good-night, David. It’s a beautiful night, isn’t it ? You have my office address in New York ? ”

“ Yes. When will you get home—in the autumn ? ”

“ In October some time. I’m going to cruise in the Mediterranean, and the Adriatic, and the Ægean, and I want to cruise as long as possible.” Mr. Wack laughed deprecatingly. “ You see, as I’ve remarked to you before, I’m one of the predatory feudal barons of great wealth, and before long they may get after us and take away from us things like the *Savonarola*, so until then I’m going to cruise as much as possible.” He paused. “ Although I don’t think they will.

STRUTHERS BURT

No, I don't think they will—as I've also remarked before. I don't think, that is, that the *Savonarolas* and the other additions to life will be out of the world for long. They'll come back, even if for a period of adjustment they disappear. Yachts are good things, so are country places; the objection to them is the average man who owns them. There's nothing really the matter with money; the trouble lies with the millionaires. Anyway, I'm too old to learn new tricks. I'm afraid I'll have to live and die by the old system. Good-night."

David watched the short dapper figure as it walked down the deck and disappeared into a companionway. It seemed to him that for the moment the back was less jaunty than usual. He walked over to the rail and stood looking at the golden sea. In the silence the funnel of the *Savonarola* made a soft sighing sound.

One had to remember every curve and inch and shadow of the woman one loved! The turn of her head. Her walk. The varying expressions of her eyes. The sound of her voice. Of her laugh. The sound of her footsteps on the ground and on stairs. David's hands gripped the rail. Well . . . he hadn't forgotten. In fact, absence had shown him how little he could forget. When you were with a person you never realised how poignant absence made remembered presence. Absence made you see the person in perspective. You were not lulled by the mere contentment of presence.

David turned his head towards the stern of the boat. Back there beyond leagues of golden water Anita would be sitting on her porch. But in a way, part of her couldn't be in St. Birgitta, any more than all of him was on this boat. If he could think of her sitting in the moonlight on her porch, then part of him was there. And certainly a great deal of her had come along with him. A partial presence that went down to his cabin with him when he went; lay down beside him

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at night; arose with him in the morning. . . . Enough of her to make him know achingly that she was not really there.

He would have to work hard when he got back to New York, otherwise he would be restless. And he would have to be patient; content to await what the future might bring forth.

Suddenly he became angry with Anita. Maybe she could maintain this delicate balance; he couldn't.

Anyway, he must get back to New York and get to work.

No . . . he wasn't angry with Anita. He couldn't be angry with her. She was trying to work out a problem. In the end she would see that there was only one solution to such a problem, that, in all history, there had never been any other solution. With that everything would be all right.

On the fifth day David awoke to the morning pastel-rose of New York's towers. They looked like the huge stamens of preposterous tulips whose leaves were the delicate mauve grey of mist. After breakfast, he and Mr. Wack careened up to their separate addresses in a taxicab that reminded David of Mr. Jorgenson's gallant launch. And David, driving up Park Avenue, knew one thing, at least, that he was definitely going to do . . . he was going back to "Strawberry" to live there the rest of his life.

[To be continued.]

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The August Number Competition—The Winning Essay —A New Competition—Notes on Contributors.

OUR readers will remember that in the August number of *Lovat Dickson's Magazine* we invited them to submit essays to us giving their reasons for approving or disapproving of each story in that issue; and for the best article we offered a prize of a twelve months' free subscription to the magazine. We offered a second prize of any two books published by Lovat Dickson, Ltd., for the best article giving reasons for preferring any one story from all the stories published in the first ten issues of this magazine.

We did not reckon with the response we should get to this invitation. Articles flowed into the office, and all of them, a fact which is indicative of the type of people who are regular readers of this magazine, were intelligently critical, substantiating their criticisms with reasons with

which we might not agree, but which we could not but admit were logical and defensible. Of the many essays submitted, I propose to make mention of those submitted by the following readers :

Giles Wing
"Holiday Reader"
George Pendle
Henry J. R. Saint

Most of the essays were concerned with the first part of the competition only. The August number was a particularly suitable one to choose for this purpose, for, partly by accident (a tradition in the periodical world, perhaps wrongly, calls for a varied list of contents in the holiday months) and partly by design, for we had this competition in mind in framing the number, the stories were sufficiently diverse in character to

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appeal to a variety of tastes. We were aware that we could not justifiably award the prize to the essay which most closely approximated what would be our own choice of the best. The award would have to be made to the essay which supported its criticism of the stories with the most closely-reasoned and pertinent argument. Style had to be taken into account, for any criticism gains force from the manner of its presentation; and suggestions for the improve-

ment of the magazine could not be ignored, for constructive criticism has a value that a negative condemnation can never have.

It was because his was at once the most constructive as well as the most discerning criticism that we finally decided to award the prize in this part of the competition to Giles Wing. His contribution was appropriately called :

TALKING OF THE AUGUST NUMBER

"Hullo, Mary!—Come in—I'm not busy. What's that you've got there? Oh-ho!—so it was you who thieved my August *Lovat Dickson*; I was wondering where it had got to. Well, thanks for bringing it back, anyhow. As a matter of fact, I've been taking the thing since it started—it seemed to me a genuinely interesting effort. And, now I think of it, I wonder you don't take it—with your interest in the Short Story, and so on. You think you will?—Good. Eh?—What's that?—Think you might get it *given* to you. . . . Oh, this 'Invitation' of theirs, you mean? Why—yes, of course I'll help you if you want me to.—But . . . *really*, I must say I don't think you need have been *quite* so transparent about your real reason for suddenly spending an afternoon with me! *Nor* am I at all sure that being what you call 'honest' about it makes you any less a disgustingly mercenary little beast. . . .

"Well, well.—Come and sit in the garden. It's cooler there. That's better. Now—just let me run my eye over that number for a few moments, and I'll tell you how it struck me. . . .

"Oh, yes—Lawrence—very interesting I found that; and then Armstrong, two of the best stories they've published in all the ten numbers.—Maurois (*clever fellow*) . . . Marian Bower . . . Nils-son . . . new writer called Peter Delius . . . bloke called Weisenberg . . . chunk of a serial. Oh, yes—and the usual bunch of personalities at the end; I've always thought that rather pointless. I agree that a skilful abstract of purely *literary* facts *may* quite well be

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useful where a writer has already published other work—particularly if *dates* of his other books are given. I'll even agree that his age *may* conceivably be of some importance. But (perhaps I am unfeeling) I can never discover that a story has either more or less *literary* significance for me after I have learnt that the writer of it was educated at Harrow or Hogs Norton, likes fishing or loves children. But that's just a personal quibble. The Editor obviously knows his own business best in that connection (though I must say that, as a note on the author of *Meïpe*, *Bernard Quesnay* and *Climats*, the account of Maurois in this issue is curiously inadequate).

"Then again—take this business of running a serial. You must give your own opinion of that, as of all the rest—of course you must. But, for my part, I can *not* read a book (conceived by its author as a whole, remember) in snippets at monthly intervals. At the very least, it seems to me unfair to the author—quite apart from the very pertinent question as to what a serial is doing at all in a magazine which, on its contents page, is so publicly emphatic about being 'Devoted Solely to the Short Story.' So far as I am concerned, since I thought *Festival* quite a good book, I shall sooner or later read *Entertaining the Islanders*; and I have no intention of foregoing that pleasure for the sake of reading it piecemeal.

"But let's get on to the stories. Since they're fresh in your mind, I may as well 'begin at the beginning, go on to the end, and then stop.' First of all, then, the Lawrence. But, before discussing it, I must remark that, here again, the *Our Contributors* section very slightly annoyed me! With every wish to be fair, I should still have thought that a hitherto unprinted Lawrence story was of sufficient importance to justify some attempt at assigning a date to it. It was the same with the other Lawrence story that they printed a month or two ago—no date. I am not forgetting that Lawrence's papers may be in a state which makes it very difficult or impossible to date some of his stuff; but, if so, even that would have been worth a note.

"So, whether *Strike-Pay* is early Lawrence or not, I don't know. I couldn't quite make up my mind about it. Certainly there's none of the famous Laurentian prose, and none of his somatic ecstasies. Perhaps, then, we may reasonably fancy it to be 'early Lawrence.' Anyhow, it's a good story—and that's what matters most. Moreover, it's a very neat specimen of the old-fashioned prelude-and-fugue method. You know what I mean—stringing out a series of seeming trivialities, each of which, while yet lacking its full intrinsic significance, does, by coming just where it did, contribute its quota to the complex flavour of a carefully engineered finale, and in such a way that the peculiar satisfaction of the reader springs not only from

the sudden unifying of discrete particles (for that is always one source of artistic satisfaction), but also and equally from the retrospective appreciation of how each triviality assumes its rightful import at a focus. The two things are *not* the same—though they *are* complementary. And that, my dear, is why (for your literary soul's good) I've gone hair-splitting about it. For the distinction is a vital one, and failure to perceive it has flawed more stories and vitiated more respectable criticism than I should have thought possible in an age where literary 'technique' is so esteemed. After that, the tale pleases *me* by its excellent economy—perhaps because economy was too often a quality which the greater (and later?) Lawrence conspicuously lacked. Oh, yes—I know what you are going to say: 'God's plenty,' and all that. You may be right—though *I've* never felt like that about Lawrence. Fortunately, the present story does not prompt any such reference. So let's get on to the next.

"This story of Nilsson's is also of a conventional type. Of course, it's a translation—but please don't think I'm mouthing the obvious; for there's always one important critical disadvantage in considering a piece of translated literature: simply that, unless one knows the original, it is impossible to estimate what contribution the author's *style* makes to his total effect—a piece of ignorance which can sometimes be very unfortunate. However, though with that reservation, I'll say that in this instance I don't think it matters much. The thing seems to me very poor *stuff*—I had almost said 'trash.' There is no psychology, and so no characterisation. The theme is one that could have been (and has been) made into a magnificent story. But, in Nilsson's handling of it, it is lifeless. The only thing that can keep such a tale *vital* is the psychological relationship between the chief character and the secondary characters, and—to a certain extent—that between both and the narrator. In this tale that vital nexus is not merely not brought out, it's not *there* to be brought. The whole 'business' is flimsily automatic and superficial. And when I say 'superficial,' I mean, more precisely, that the very details which should contribute enormously to the total effect are never built in, but remain, as it were, stuck on to the surface. The resulting 'short story' reads to me unpleasantly like a 'write-up' in the popular press; particularly as, unfortunately for the author, it happens to be followed by a story in which both selection and manipulation are well-nigh faultless—*The Ogress*.

"You thought so too? Yes—and I must admit that, with two stories in the number like Lawrence's and Martin Armstrong's, it *is* difficult to be fair to the rest. You thought *The Ogress* definitely the best? I can quite understand that. It *is*—how shall I put it?—a first-class 'job of work.' The author *does* seem to me to have done

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what he wanted to do with delightfully exact contriving—there's not a spare ounce of flesh anywhere on the body of the story; and, although it's built up in 'little touches,' none is superfluous, and each contributes exactly its requisite quantum to a peculiarly subtle evocation of atmosphere. For (didn't you think ?) the climax of the story, while exciting enough in itself, comes finally with a greatly enhanced 'thrill' simply because of the way in which complete realisation of the *atmosphere* (both mental and physical) in which the climax occurs has been so beautifully prepared in the reader's mind. To take one small instance: the Ogress's two references to shut windows, *followed by the narrator's excursion in the fresh air*, give the reader exactly the right amount of intensified realisation of how stuffy the room was in the final scene; so that, when it comes to the point, a single passing reference to the 'stale and airless room' is all that the author requires to make us instantly add in *all* the beastly stuffiness for ourselves—add it relevantly, I mean, to the general effect of 'the uneasy' which, at that point, the author has almost brought to the boil. It's only a small point, I admit; but it's by no means the only one of that kind in the story. And, in this business of the Short Story, it is in just such points (plus the proper inter-bracing of style) that the distinction between Art and Commerce is most clearly apparent. For (if you notice) there is nothing in the *kind* of story *The Ogress* is to differentiate it from dozens of popular-magazine 'short stories.'

"As to the delicate trifle that comes next, this again is a translation; but here it happens that I have the advantage of knowing most of Maurois' best work at first hand. I've not read this particular story in the original, but I can say at once that Hamish Miles seems to me to have succeeded in rendering his author's style quite excellently. This story, too, I thought definitely good; a slight—very slight—matter, if you like, but exquisitely managed. So smooth (almost sleek), and so easily articulated that, unless you try to do something similar for yourself, you will hardly realise how incredibly difficult it is to keep even so short a story unfalteringly on just that particularly delicate-difficult note of gently significant urbanity from start to finish. If you succeed, you will produce what I sometimes fancy is really the most difficult of all (as it is certainly the most rare)—the acceptable presentation of Sentiment; but, if your hold upon your material is in the least degree faulty, the consequences are likely to be very unpleasant: too tight a hold, and the result is cheap irony; too loose a hold, and the result is still worse—sentimentality! But . . . you know, there *is*, even in this tale, just one little touch which gives me a momentary jar of dissonance—a suspicion, almost, of defect. I mean that remark of old Grove's

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(p. 181): 'You'll see how beautiful she is.' . . . No; the more I think about it, the more I distrust it. Mrs. Parker might have said that—might have whispered it, perhaps; but Grove? No—*not* Grove!

"Miss Bower's story, like Nilsson's, has the misfortune to follow an altogether too noticeable superior. Indeed, Mary, if you really want to ruin your chances, you might suggest that the Editor might have been wiser to have printed *That Pansy Smith* immediately after *The Man Who Defied God*—than which it *is* better, but not much. I don't think it ought to have been printed at all; firstly, because it's bad—and, secondly, because Miss Bower can write (and has written) much better stories. This type of story—which I call the Inflated Anecdote—is, again, an extremely tricky type to handle successfully. And it is a constant surprise to me that so many contemporary writers should favour it. There's nothing against it *as a type*—there are most excellent Inflated Anecdotes to be found in the works of W. W. Jacobs, Neil Lyons, A. E. Coppard, Liam O'Flaherty and the late Stacy Aumonier, to name no others. But what so many attempters of the Inflated Anecdote seem to me wholly to ignore is that, having chosen this form, the unique justification of the 'inflating' is that it should consist only in getting more out of, *by* putting more into, the 'anecdote.' Paradoxically, this can only be done successfully by a writer who is able to keep a high power of conciseness and stylistic skill continuously and evenly in full blast. Consequently, of this type of story there are far too many examples whose authors succeed manfully in 'putting more into' their anecdote, seemingly confident in the assumption that nothing more could possibly be required of them. *That Pansy Smith* seems to me to be such a story—laboured, incompletely realised, devitalised, stylistically poor, and far too long.

"The next two stories are fairy tales—Peter Delius's perhaps faintly recalling Michael Arlen, and Leo Weisenberg's (less faintly) Hans Andersen. I enjoyed them both, but preferred *The Alarm-Clock*. I liked Mr. Mocatta—though I had an uneasy feeling that he would not have talked broken English to *himself*. I liked Andrei and Anna and their alarm-clock still better. On the whole, I think *Mr. Mocatta* is reasonably competent, but no more; at the same time, as an example of its type, and by a writer unknown to me, the story pleased me sufficiently to fix the writer's name in my mind until I next meet something of his (which is saying quite a lot in these days!)

"There seems to be nothing to show whether Weisenberg's tale is a translation or not; I assume that it is. In some ways it is the most trifling thing in the number; but I am not yet irrevocably committed to the belief that 'Life is real, life is earnest'; so that, when it

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is good, a story like *The Alarm-Clock* delights me quite as much by being a difficult thing well done as by being an exquisite reminder that the word 'artificiality' once had a most respectable meaning. Scoffers may object that the characters are hardly more than indicated; but that is just as it should be. In this kind of fairy tale the characters most commonly acquire their particular charm from being not very much more energised than all the other ingredients. In fact, Mary, if you insist upon annoying the Editor by censuring his placing of *That Pansy Smith*, you might quite well mollify him by congratulating him upon putting *The Alarm-Clock* at the end of the number!

"But, look here: I see that, in this 'Invitation' of theirs, they are offering a couple of books for a selection and criticism of the best story in each of the previous nine numbers. Why don't you have a shot at that too? I told you I had the other numbers—I'll lend them to you. And then, if you like, when you bring them back (and mind you do!), we could run through them with my coarse critical thumb. Anyhow—have a look at them; for there must be quite eight or nine tales scattered through the run that you'd be sorry to miss.—And there (as Henry James might say)—'there, in a manner of speaking, we all are!'"

Mr. Wing does not like our "Notes on Contributors," though he would accept an abstract of purely literary facts where an author has already published other work. His reason for not approving the inclusion of the serial in a magazine points to a discrepancy which we might never have noticed otherwise. His analysis of Lawrence's method in *Strike-Pay* is a masterly piece of criticism. It reveals what is too often missed, that the good short story is as complete and intricate a piece of mechanism as you will find in literature.

To Giles Wing the first prize, the free annual subscription to the magazine, definitely had to go. It is partly comforting,

partly disturbing, to know that we shall have his critical eye on us for the next twelve months. These are to be hazardous months. We are entering now a period of change and growth towards what we hope will be an even lustier life than the youthful state we enjoy at the moment. Our youth has, as his essay shows, this genial critic's general approval. Can we hope to win his praise in our full age?

For a warm-hearted and moving appreciation of Andre Maurois' *Louisa Lady Whitney*, "Holiday Reader's" essay is much to be commended. There is a nostalgia for the old and pleasant past evident in this pseudonymous contribution that

leads the reader to wonder at the identity and circumstances of the author. The criticism in this essay of all the stories was good. Where personal preference alone seemed the reason for praising or condemning any particular story, the author was frank enough to admit the bias, a quality which was not apparent in all the contributions submitted!

George Pendle, for instance, wrote vividly of his feeling for the different stories, but it seemed to us at least that his judgment of a story was coloured by his political prejudices; that what he was really stating were his own partialities rather than disinterested criticism of the literary merit of the stories. In this respect our original announcement of this competition may have been confusing.

Mr. Henry J. R. Saint's was a contribution that deserves special mention. Particularly valuable were the opening pages of his essay, in which he discusses discerningly the way in which biography has entered the field of fiction (that is a belief which we strongly hold and which is responsible for the deviation, which commences with this issue, of the policy of this magazine).

The essays concerned with the second part of the competition were neither so numerous nor so good as those which were entered for the first part. There is no room left in these pages for a detailed commentary on them.

The prize again has to go to Giles Wing, whose essay in this part was as well-informed and discerning as the essay which we have printed earlier in the section. If Mr. Wing will write and say which two books from Lovat Dickson's list he wants, they will be sent to him.

A NEW COMPETITION

This competition has met with so enthusiastic a response that this month we have decided to inaugurate another, one that is to be both more permanent and practical. We now offer a prize of Two Guineas for the best short story not exceeding three thousand words in length, submitted to us each month by any writer who has not previously published a short story. We retain the right to publish the short story in *Lovat Dickson's Magazine*, and to pay over to the author any further sums arising from the sale of book rights, American rights, Anthology or second serial rights. The competition will be open until further notice. All stories, which *must* be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, and must have attached to them the coupon to be found on page vi of this issue, received in this office up to the last day of any month will be considered for the competition for that particular month, and announcement as to awards will be made in the issue for the

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second month following. The Editor's decision will be final.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Helen Simpson is best known as the author of *Boomerang*. Brilliant, hard-working, admired for the distinction that marks all her work, which will be remembered when much that has been written in this generation will be forgotten, as much that was written in our father's time has already been. . . . Hilda Vaughan comes from one county south of that lovely Montgomeryshire Eiluned Lewis has made famous in her delicate novel *Dew on the Grass*. Her novels, the brilliant work of a richly imaginative mind, have that sense of contact with the countryside that seems to inform the work of all writers who have Celtic blood. . . . Hugh Forsyth edited the *Granta* at Cambridge, and here presents his first short story. . . . Raoul Auernheimer's reputation stands high in Austria. Sir Harry Luke, his translator, is Lieutenant-Governor of Malta, and the author of *An Eastern Chequerboard* and *In the Margin of History*. . . . Frank O'Connor, young Irish author of two novels, began to prepare a collected edition of his own works at the age of twelve. Learned several languages while interned by the

Free State Government, and after his release won a prize for a study of Turgenev in Irish. By profession and inclination a librarian. . . . John Steinbeck, at various times ranch hand, painter's apprentice, chemist, has, in the opinion of his last foreman, "the makings of a damn fine labourer." Has written two novels, *Pastures of Heaven* and *To a God Unknown* (Heinemann publishers). The story in this issue will put him in the class of H. E. Bates, whose work his most closely approximates in style and exposition. . . . Lilika Nakos, young Athenian radical writer, specialising in the short story. Here is a fine example of her work.

LITERARY EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

Because of the space we have had to devote this month to the August competition, we have to postpone the news of events and personalities in the literary world which we intend to include each month in this section. It will appear in *End Pages* next month. Any other suggestions which our readers can make for inclusion in this section will be welcomed by the Editor, who hopes his readers will learn to look upon *End Pages* as an open Forum in which they may freely express their opinion.

L. D.